

"Go, and teach all nations"
Mathew 28 Chap: 19 v.
Search the Scriptures:
John 5 Chap: 39 v.

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OBLIGATIONS OF THE WORLD

TO

THE BIBLE:

A SERIES OF LECTURES TO YOUNG MEN.

BY

GARDINER SPRING, D.D.,
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INTRODUCTION.

IN venturing to give this Work to the public, the Author complies with repeated and earnest solicitations. The subject is of sufficient importance to have employed the pen of abler men; nor does he doubt that abler thinkers, and students of greater research and more leisure, will find abundant cause for animadversion in the following pages. They have been prepared amid the undiminished labours of the pulpit during the last autumn and winter; and now that he has committed them to the press, more deeply than ever does he desire that his time and engagements permitted him to give them a more careful revision. Though very many of the thoughts here presented are not new, he is not aware that the train of thought and illustration has ever been presented before. So far as this humble and imperfect effort may tend to such a result, his earnest desire has been to exalt and honour the Holy Scriptures, more especially in the estimation of the young. With the fervent prayer to their God and their fathers' God, that it may be thus directed, he submits it to their attention.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS.

THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE WORLD TO THE BIBLE.

LECTURE I.

THE USE OF ORAL AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE TO BE ATTRIBUTED TO A SUPERNATURAL REVELATION.

"WHOEVER," says the celebrated Tholuck, "whoever stands on a lofty mountain should not look merely at the gold which the morning sun pours on the grass and flowers at his feet; but he should sometimes also look behind him into the deep valley where the shadows still rest, that he may more sensibly feel that that sun is indeed a sun. Thus is it also salutary for the disciple of Christ, at times, from the kingdom of light to cast forth a glance over the dark stage where men play their part in lonely gloom, without a Saviour, without a God!" The enquiry has no doubt often occurred to every reflecting mind, What had the condition of the world now been had no supernatural revelation ever been imparted to men? The design of these Lectures, my young friends, is to call your attention to the Bible, and to exalt and honour, in your estimation and my own, this Great Book. The most fearful blow that can be directed against the best interests of men is aimed by unbelief; and owes its success not unfrequently to an imperfect knowledge of the Bible, as well as neglect of its sacred precepts. Can then a higher service be performed for the youth of our metropolis than to vindicate its claims,

assert its superiority, and challenge for it the scrutiny of the incredulous, and the admiration of every devout mind?

We look for greatness in all the works of God. We gaze upon the exterior universe, and exclaim with the Psalmist, "Marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; in wisdom hast thou made them all!" We expect a supernatural revelation to exhibit its divine Author in the same illustrious and splendid character in which he appears in the works of creation and providence. Nor are such expectations disappointed or deceived. Infinite intelligence belongs to the Deity. We see it in his works, and we see it in his word. At the first glance, we can scarcely fail to perceive that the God of creation and providence is the God of the Bible, and that the system of truth revealed in the Scriptures must have originated with the same being who created and governs the world.[1] When, however, we examine the Bible carefully and minutely; when we explore the treasures of its pages, and seem for the moment to grasp the full measure of its wonders and its knowledge; how is our admiration heightened! The words of the apostle break almost instinctively from our lips: the expression of his feelings becomes the best expression of our own,—"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!"

It was the remark of a sensible and thinking layman, many years ago made to the writer, that "it sometimes seemed to him that the Bible is as much greater than all other books as its Author is greater than all other authors." I am well persuaded that the seeming extravagance of such an observation will diminish with our increasing acquaintance with this wonderful volume. Tindal, a deistical writer in the early part of the seventeenth century, in his work entitled, 'Christianity as old as the Creation,' labours to show that it was impossible for God to teach men what they did not know before, and that the perfection of the human mind is such that it admits of no addition from a supernatural revelation. I cannot but hope that the presumption and preposterousness of this remark will

[1] The spirit of this remark is largely illustrated in that incomparable work, 'The Analogy of Religion, natural and revealed, to the constitution and course of nature,' by Joseph Butler, LL.D.

appear in the following pages. It is not surprising that a deist should depreciate a supernatural revelation. But it is matter of surprise that, as Christians, we should not appreciate it more highly. There is no book in any country, in any language, in any age, that can be compared with this. From one page of this wonderful volume more may be acquired than reason or philosophy could acquire by the patience and toil of centuries. The Bible expands the mind, exalts the faculties, developes the powers of the will and of feeling, furnishes a more just estimate of the true dignity of man, and opens more sources of intellectual and spiritual enjoyment than any other book. Science and literature have taken deep root in this consecrated soil. No book furnishes so many important hints to the human mind, gives so many clues to intellectual discovery, and has so many charms in so many departments of human enquiry. In whatever paths of science or walks of human knowledge we tread, there is scarcely a science, or pursuit of permanent advantage to mankind, which may not either trace its origin to the Bible, or to which the Bible will not be found to be a powerful auxiliary.

Whether we consider its influence upon an oral and written language—upon history and literature—upon laws and government—upon civil and religious liberty—upon the social institutions—upon moral science and the moral virtues—upon the holiness which fits men for heaven, and the peculiar spirit and exalted character which prepares them to act well their part on the earth—upon the happiness they enjoy in the present world—or upon the agency and power by which these desirable results are secured; we shall be at no loss to see that the world in which we live is under everlasting obligations to a supernatural revelation. In this enumeration of topics, you have the general outline of the following lectures.

The present opportunity will be devoted to the thought, that the use of oral and written language is to be attributed to a supernatural revelation. The art most necessary for man, even from the commencement of his existence, must have been *language.* If not an indispensable instrument of thought, yet without it his mind must of necessity be confined within a very

narrow and limited range. His most immediate wants, the play of various passions, and perhaps an imperfect and incoherent narrative might be indicated by signs and the expression of his features. Communications less apparent than these—those shades of emotion, those fainter recollections, and above all, those more intricate combinations of thought arising from the experience of others, as compared with and confirming, modifying, or refuting his own,—these must be debarred him until he is in possession of an oral language.

And how could man ever have invented articulate speech? Universal observation shows that children learn to speak by imitation; and "where the opportunities are wanting, the use of articulate speech is unknown." If I mistake not, it is a fact well ascertained that not an instance is found of the use of articulate sounds as the signs of thought, unless taught immediately by God, or gradually by those who had themselves been instructed. We see not how it is possible for language to have been of human invention. Its structure is too complicated and artificial. It must have required the previous use of language to have constructed the most simple language of the most uninstructed tribes. And whence is it, if language were of human invention, that the oldest languages are more complete in their structure than those languages that have been more recently formed; and why, as we mark the progress of improvement, are we not carried back to some early and rude state of this invention?

The use of language is so necessary to the convenience and comfort of man, and the difficulty of forming it so obvious, that it is not unreasonable to suppose it would be immediately conferred upon him by the Author of his existence. He had a body "curiously and wonderfully made," and a mind so capacious, strong, and penetrating, as to have been, before his apostacy, the greatest as well as the best of men: and yet, must this "noblest work of God" have been very imperfect without speech. Nor is it easy to see how his attainments could have been so surprisingly great and rapid, or how his intellectual endowments could have been so successfully cultivated as we know they were, if he had been originally ignorant of all language.

But while the nature of the case might convince us that language is of divine origin, when we look into the Mosaic history, that conviction must be confirmed. There we learn that the *laws* given to our first parents were given through the medium of language. They obviously *conversed* with God and with one another. Nor have we any intimation that this intercourse was conducted in any other way than by an oral language. The early worship of our first parents could not have been purely mental and meditative; but oral, and in the noblest language ever uttered by man. We learn too, that our progenitor very early gave *names* to all the animal creation. It was by the channel of an oral language also that the Tempter infused the first taint of sin into the bosom of man, breathing his poison with his words. It seems indeed to be more generally conceded, that the first use of oral language is to be attributed to a supernatural revelation. There are exceptions to this opinion, but it is very difficult to give any other tolerable account of the origin of this art.[1]

The researches of the most accredited philologists go far to support this opinion. The more critically modern as well as ancient languages are investigated, the more are they found to resemble each other in their roots and primary forms, and the more clearly are referable to one common stock. The languages which prevailed in all the South of Europe after the destruction of the Roman Empire were a barbarous mixture of the Latin with the different languages of the Northern invaders. The modern languages of Europe have all evidently been derived from the Roman; the Roman from the Greek, and the Greek from the Phœnician. Goguet, in his 'Origin of Laws, Arts, and Sciences,' remarks that "the comparison of the Phœnician and Greek Alphabets would alone be sufficient to convince

[1] This topic is discussed at length by Herder on the origin of language; by Suckford in his connexions; by Condillac on the origin of human knowledge; by Smith in his 'Theory of Moral Sentiment;' by Magee in a valuable note to his work on Atonement and Sacrifice; by the Edinburgh Encyclopedia, article Language; by Dr. Samuel S. Smith; by Stilingfleet, in his 'Origines Sacræ;' in the Boylean Lectures; in Beattie's 'Theory of Language;' in 'The Scholar Armed;' in Woolaston's 'Religion of Nature,' and in Winder's 'History of Knowledge.'

us of this. It is visible that the Greek characters are only the Phœnician letters turned from right to left." Authorities might be greatly multiplied to show that the Phœnicians spoke a dialect of the *Hebrew*. The Chaldee, Syriac, and Samaritan are also dialects of the Hebrew, without any considerable deviation, or many additional words. There is a striking similarity also between the Ethiopic and the Hebrew; the Hebrew and the Arabic, and the Arabic and the Persic. There are strong analogies between the Sanscrit and the Coptic; while the Coptic is identified with the ancient Egyptian. Dr. Lightfoot, whom Adam Clarke pronounces to have been the first scholar in Europe, is of the opinion that the original tongue was Hebrew; that this was the language spoken in Canaan before the time of Joshua; that it was the language of Adam and the language of God. "God," says he, "was the first founder of it, and Adam was the first speaker of it. It began with the world and the Church, and increased in glory till the captivity in Babylon. The whole language is contained in the Bible, and no other book contains in it an entire language."[1]

The German scholars of the present century would present much the same account, while they seem to hesitate in expressing the opinion that the Hebrew is the mother tongue. We learn from them that the modern languages of Europe, together with the Gothic, Sclavonic, Greek, and Latin, are discovered to bear a close affinity; and, under the name of *Indo-European*, are classed with them in one family. Between these and the *Semitic* family, which, among others, includes the Hebrew, Chaldaic, Syriac Samaritan, Ethiopic and Arabic, striking analogies are discovered, and by every new research they are becoming more fully identified. Wiseman, a learned Romanist, says that the decision of the academy of St. Petersburgh upon the celebrated paper of count Goulianoff, was, that all languages are to be considered as dialects of one now lost. I am at a loss to understand the ground of this uncertainty. The Chaldee and Syriac were formerly one language, only they were written with a different character; and they were both dialects of the Hebrew. The hypothesis, for it is an

[1] Lightfoot's Works.

hypothesis merely, that the book of Job is older than the Pentateuch and was written in Arabic, seems indeed to countervail the position that the Hebrew is the first *written* language. And yet Lightfoot unhesitatingly affirms that the Arabic is a dialect of the Hebrew, and that "all languages are indebted to this, and this to none." This much however may be confided in, that both believers and unbelievers in the Mosaic history have affirmed the original *unity* of all language; disclaiming the notion that men are of entirely distinct races, and thus far corroborating the position that the same divine source of the physical organs of speech imparted to man the knowledge of their use and power.

The first method of rendering thought visible was by pictures, symbols, and the various kinds of ideagraphic writing. But there is a marked distinction between these imperfect and elementary forms and *Alphabetical writing*. This is a system which is expressive primarily of sound rather than of thought. Instead of employing characters as multifarious as the different objects to be pointed out, it makes visible by the combination of a few elements of sound, every idea which the mind is capable of conceiving.

From our familiarity with this art, it is not easy for us to appreciate its importance. The extreme simplicity by which results so complicated are attained, bears a strong analogy, not to the works of man's invention, but to the operations of the God of nature, distinguished as they are, not less by the fewness and simplicity of their agents, than their astonishing, nay unlimited combinations. Were we now in possession only of such a mode of writing as distinguished the ancient Egyptians, or the Mexicans upon the discovery of this continent, and as distinguishes the Chinese at the present day; and should some gigantic mind penetrate the mysteries of sound, embody them and give them form, and present to us our simple Alphabet, the first lesson of our childhood, and explain to us its combinations and its uses; what honours, I had almost said, what veneration should we withhold from him!

The claims of most nations to this singular discovery arise solely from their supposed antiquity. And yet is it a some-

what remarkable fact, that some of the most ancient nations remained destitute of this art long after it had prevailed in adjacent countries.[1] Dr. M'Knight remarks that "the literal method of writing is generally said to have been first practised by the Phœnicians;" though he himself countenances the idea that the first specimen of the art was that on the tables given to Moses. But, it may be shown with the utmost degree of probability that the Phœnician Alphabet was derived from the Hebrew. A learned writer in the Edinburgh Encyclopædia expresses the opinion, "that the pretensions of the Phœnicians must give way to the better established claim of the Hebrews." Goguet thinks it more probable that this invention is to be ascribed either to the Assyrians, or the Egyptians. It is true that the Assyrians were a more ancient people than the Hebrews; but, their antiquity extended beyond the period when letters were invented. On the mere ground of antiquity, they have a higher claim than any other nation. But I have found no evidence in favour of their claims except this. On the contrary, the best authorities dispute their pretensions. With regard to Egypt, more may be said in invalidating its claims to this invention than has been said against those of Phœnicia and Assyria. Is there not a sort of literary mania which has led so many renowned men to ascribe almost all that is valuable in literature, science, or the arts to Egypt? Though comparatively a very incompetent judge of matters of this sort, I have never been so convinced as some have been of the superiority of this degraded and pagan empire. Egypt "owed her splendour to strangers rather than to her own vigorous and nourished intellect." Scythia rivalled her in arms, Tyre in commerce, Syria in letters, Chaldea in astronomy, and Babylon in every department of natural science. Dr. Delaney

[1] The leading authors to which I have had access on this general subject are Winder's 'History of Knowledge'—Goguet's 'Origin of Laws'—Dugald Stewart's Dissertation prefixed to the Encyclopædia Britannica—the Edinburgh Review for 1836,—the works of Lightfoot—Astle on the 'Origin and Progress of Writing'—Warburton's 'Divine Legation of Moses'—Gilbert Wakefield's Dissertation on Alphabetical Writing—Daubuz on the Revelation—and also some valuable thoughts at the close of the last volume of Dr. M'Knight on the Apostolic Epistles.

in his Life of David, expresses the opinion that the great models of Grecian architecture, are not, as has more generally been supposed, to be traced to Egypt, but to that most perfect of all models, the Temple at Jerusalem, the entire plan of which was given to David by God himself. The hieroglyphics of the ancient Egyptians were never brought to such a state of perfection as to constitute a system of phonetic writing. They remain to the present day; and they are almost useless and silent, because they represent none of the elements of articulation, and bear no analogy to any other system, whether ancient or modern. Whatever may have been their learning of other kinds, the Egyptians never possessed Alphabetical writing; they were "contented with their hieroglyphical method, and never, of themselves, advanced beyond it." The same may be remarked of the Chinese even at the present day. It is a point well established that the elements of their writing, or *keys* as they are termed, are merely symbolical, and could never have given rise to any one of the Oriental alphabets. It is "purely an artificial structure which denotes every idea by its appropriate sign without any relation to the utterance. It speaks to the eye like the numerical ciphers of the Europeans, which every one understands and utters in his own way." Modern authors seem generally to agree in tracing the pervading ignorance of this people to this fact. Neither can the claims of the Hindoos be defended on any better grounds than those of the nations already named. Sir William Jones has clearly made it appear that the Hindoo pretensions to antiquity are excessively extravagant, if not altogether fabulous. Events which they used to fix at a date of some million or two years back, actually took place in the tenth or eleventh century of the Christian era. The famous astronomical tables, by which it has been imagined that great antiquity might be assigned to this nation, are shown to be incorrect, and to have been calculated backwards. It has been satisfactorily proved that the Treatise which they consider the most ancient in the world must have been compiled since the Christian era began.

Though no man is warranted in speaking with confidence on this subject, yet is there not some good reason to believe

that the earliest specimens of a written language came from the Hebrews? Is there not presumptive evidence of this, in the mere fact that the first *oral* language was the Hebrew? If the Hebrew language was the language originally imparted to men; if it was preserved through all the corruptions of the antediluvian world, through the division of the family of Noah in the time of Peleg, and through the subsequent confusion of tongues; if it was the language in which God spoke to Abraham and to Moses, and in which Moses conveyed the revelation of the divine will to mankind; is there not some strong presumption in favour of the idea that it was the first written language?

Notwithstanding the efforts of the infidels of Germany, who have endeavoured to show that alphabetical writing was not in use at all even so early as the time of Moses, it will not be denied except by infidels of the boldest class, that the Hebrew characters existed in a perfect state when this inspired author wrote the Pentateuch. Dr. Winder, in his 'History of Knowledge,' maintains the position, that the art of alphabetical writing was communicated to Moses when the Great Lawgiver gave him the law upon mount Sinai. The considerations which support this hypothesis, to say the least, amount to strong presumption in its favour. With two exceptions writing is not even apparently mentioned in the Scriptures before the giving of the law, and these as we shall presently show, may not invalidate the hypothesis of which we are speaking. There was no such thing as writing known before the flood, nor is there any mention made of it in the book of Genesis before that period. Nor was it known from the time of the flood to the time of Abraham's leaving Chaldea. Nor was it known in Canaan at the death of Sarah, and when Abraham bought the cave of Ephron of the sons of Heth. Goguet remarks, that "all deeds among the Hebrews at that time were *verbal*, and were authenticated and ascertained by being made in presence of all the people." Nor was it known at the time of Isaac's marriage. Nor was it [known] either in Phœnicia, or Canaan, at the time of Isaac's [le]ague with Gerar. Nor was it known either in Canaan or Syria, when Jacob went to Laban. Nor was it known in the

family of Jacob, while Joseph was in Egypt, either during his servitude, or preferment. Nor was it known at the new settlement of the lands after the famine ; nor when the Hebrews settled in Goshen ; nor when their oppression began, and the sanguinary edicts were published.[1] Though these were periods and transactions during which, had alphabetical letters existed, they would not only have been of the greatest utility, but as it seems to us indispensable, and could scarcely fail of being mentioned ; yet are they not only not mentioned, but all these important transactions, and all the correspondence between the parties, as well as all the communications from Heaven, were effected by verbal intercourse.

And yet there is a precise period beyond which they are mentioned, and mentioned on almost every fit occasion, and introduced into all the national and ecclesiastical affairs of the Jewish people. That period is the inscription of the law on mount Sinai by the hand of God, on the two tables of stone.

After this period, Moses is commanded to *write* the laws in a book ; to *write* the narrative of the war with the Amalekites ; to *write* a copy of the law for future kings ; to *record* the laws that they might read ; and to place a copy of them in the ark of the covenant. After this period also, and not before, as a close examination of the whole passage most clearly shows, we read of the engraving of the names of the twelve tribes on the breast-plate of judgment, and of the engraving on the mitre of Aaron of the memorable label, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

The *giving* of the tables it will be noticed was a different thing from the *writing* of the tables. The disregard of this very plain distinction has led to the supposition, that the charge given to Moses which relates to the ephod and breast-plate for the high priest, on which inscriptions were to be made like the engravings of a signet, was given before the law was written. The law was not given to Moses until just as he was about to leave the mount, at the close of the forty days. But it was written more than a month before ; and not until after it was written did Moses receive the instruction to prepare the ephod and the breast-plate of Aaron. *Signets* are mentioned

[1] See these positions illustrated and defended in Winder.

before the writing of the law, but there is no evidence that they were not purely hieroglyphic. God now required Moses to engrave on the mitre of Aaron *letters*, as distinctly as had heretofore been the hieroglyphic representations of a signet.

Now, whence is this perfect silence on the subject of alphabetical writing, until after the supernatural writing of the law, and whence the frequent notices of the art afterwards? Is not the only answer to this question found in the fact, that the origin of the art is to be attributed to God himself, and that he was the original instructor of Moses during the forty days in which he was upon the mount?

It would be natural to suppose, if a written language were thus discovered to men, that there would be some intimations of this fact in the Mosaic history. Are there not intimations of it? Let us advert a few moments to the narrative of this transaction as it is recorded in the book of Exodus. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me in the mount and be there; and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law and commandments, which I have written." The tables here spoken of, it is obvious, were already prepared and finished at some previous time. God affirms that he had written them. Subsequently to this, we are told that "God gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him on mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written by the finger of God." Just after this, the fact is repeated, "and the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables." It is a question which deserves to be impartially considered, whether God does not here affirm that he himself is the author of this invention. When a work is declared in the Scriptures to be the work of God, to have been wrought by the finger of God, the idea conveyed is that it is the peculiar work of God, and altogether above the power of man. When it is said that Israel is the sheep of God's hand, the meaning is that they belong to God and to no other. When the Saviour says that he cast out devils by the finger of God, we understand him as declaring that he performs a work to which no other power is adequate but the power of God. When the magicians of Egypt exclaimed of the miracles of Moses, This

is the finger of God, they acknowledged his divine mission. And so the Psalmist, when he says, "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers," expresses the idea that, no other could create the heavens but God. On the same principle idols are the invention of men, and are called the work of men's hands, and which their own fingers have made. Is it not then a fair exegetical inference, that, when the law is declared to have been written by the finger of God, the legitimate import of the phrase is, that it was so peculiarly his work that the original invention is due to him.

I remarked that with two exceptions writing is not even apparently mentioned in the Scriptures before the giving of the Law. One of these occurs just before the giving of the Law, and refers to a *future* rehearsal in the ears of Joshua of what Moses should subsequently commit to writing for the instruction and encouragement of his successor; and by no means proves that the art of writing was known to Moses before the time when the Law was written. Especially is this remark deserving of consideration, when it is recollected that it is no uncommon thing for the Scriptures to notice future events by this sort of anticipation. The other apparent exception will be found no exception at all. It is recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of Exodus. "And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord:—and he took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people." It is said, that as God did not call Moses up into the Mount and give him the written tables until after this period, Moses must have had the art of writing before the tables were written. But the question is, *when* were the tables written? Moses had been up to the mount with God before the period here referred to. His first ascent is noticed as far back as the nineteenth chapter. He had ascended a second time, as related in the same chapter. And as is related in the latter part of the same chapter, he had ascended a third time. Not until he came down after the fourth ascent is he represented as *writing* the civil and judicial statutes and reading them to the people. Now had not God prepared the two tables of the moral law before Moses wrote and read to the people their judicial code? He had not com-

mitted them to Moses till after this; but when he did commit them, it was a commitment of tables, as we have already seen, *previously prepared;* how long before no man can tell. But it cannot be shown that it was after Moses wrote and read the judicial statutes.

It is also objected to this position, that Job must have lived previous to the time of Moses, and that as he distinctly refers to ancient writing by books and sculpture, there must have been a written language before the giving of the Law. When it shall be made to appear that the book of Job was written at an earlier period than the time of Moses, it will be time enough to give weight to this objection. The age in which Job lived, and in which the book of Job was written is unknown. If the most distinguished critics may be relied upon, this book was posterior to the time of Moses, or Moses himself was its author. Dr. Warburton judges it to have been written about the close of the Babylonish captivity. Dr. John Mason Good, Dr. Winder, and Dr. Grey, with great strength of argument, attribute it to Moses. Gregory Nazianzen, Spanheim, and Adam Clarke attribute it to Solomon. Several distinguished writers have supposed that the silence of the author of this book respecting the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Exodus from Egypt, the passage of the Red sea, and the promulgation of the Law, prove that it was written prior to these events, and during the age of the early patriarchs. But is it to be supposed that every book in the sacred canon which does not refer to these events was written prior to these events themselves? Two things are indispensable to the conclusiveness of this argument, neither of which is known. The first is, that upon the supposition, that the author of the book of Job, or Job himself had lived subsequently to these events, he was acquainted with them; the second is, that upon the supposition that he was acquainted with them, they must necessarily or even probably have been noticed in this Book. Nor does the longevity of Job necessarily place him in an age previous to the giving of the Law. That he did not live in so early an age as that of the longeval patriarchs is evident from two considerations; in the first place, the reference of Bildad to the

longevity of that age, as a peculiarity that distinguished it from his own, as appears from the 8th and 9th verses of the 8th chapter; and in the second place, there is no evidence that the age of Job himself was such as to justify the remark, that he "was old and full of days," unless he lived long after the early patriarchs. The writer of the passage, "man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not;" cannot well be supposed to have lived at a period when the life of man was prolonged from six hundred to a thousand years. The reference to the flood as a very ancient event is inconsistent with the supposition that Job lived anywhere near the period of those who walked in the "old way" and were "cut down out of time." The reference to the law of land-marks and pledges rather indicates also that the hero of this book lived after the time of Moses.

It has also been said that there is ground for a presumption that the art of writing was known before the time of Moses, in the fact that there were officers called *Shoterim* among the Israelites; and that this word primarily and properly means writers. The passage referred to is Exodus the fifth chapter and sixth verse. "And Pharaoh commanded the same day the task-masters and the officers, saying, ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick." Our translators translate the Hebrew word *officers*, and most certainly the scope and sense of the passage would be violated by translating it *writers*. Adam Clarke says that the *shoterim* "were an inferior sort of officers, who attended on superior officers or magistrates to execute their orders." So say Patrick and Rosenmuller, who give at length the reasons for this opinion. And Mr. Poole gives the same translation, affirming, with Rosenmuller, that the secondary meaning of the word is scribes.

It appears therefore in a high degree probable that the art of writing was imparted to Moses at the giving of the Law. The hypothesis is certainly attended with fewer difficulties than any other which I have met with. The two tables we are informed were written by the finger of God; and after these were broken they were rewritten by the same unerring hand.

And what additional, what overwhelming evidence would it offer to the Jewish people of the divine origin of the moral law when these tables were presented to them, inscribed with mysterious and living characters! If Moses himself was unacquainted with the art of writing before he ascended the mount, the possibility of collusion or deceit was precluded, and the most stubborn minds must have yielded implicit confidence in the divine legation of their lawgiver. We find that notwithstanding the solemnity of that memorable scene, a portion of the people gave themselves up to idolatry, even while Moses was yet communing with God upon the mount. After his descent with the two tables in his hand, as the final witness and seal of his errand, for a long time we hear no more of doubts, no more following after idols ; and is it unreasonable to suppose that the obstinacy of an incredulous people was at last vanquished by the two tables of *testimony?* If you ask, why there were no demonstrations of surprise on the part of the Jewish lawgiver upon the revelation of this art, or on the part of the people at its introduction among them; I reply, there may have been, though they are not recorded. And even if there were not, we need not wonder at this, when we recollect that Moses was with God forty days in the mount, and especially when we reflect upon the prodigies which nature every where displayed around the people, when Sinai sent up its flame and smoke, and the voice of the ever-living God was heard amid the thunders of the mount.

And is it not somewhat remarkable that, if of human origin, the author of so wonderful a discovery as that of alphabetical writing should be so utterly lost in the remote ages of antiquity, that no man can specify the nation, or even the era to which it can be attributed ? There is something quite as ludicrous to my mind in the theories of the gradual construction of alphabetical letters, as there is in the system of Pagan cosmogony. Is it reasonable to suppose, for example, that the old Shemitish letter D was suggested by the word *door*, or the old Shemitish letter H by the word *fence*, and the Shemitish V by a *hook* or *nail?* And yet this system has very learned advocates. May we not gravely enquire whether the invention of

letters does not exceed the powers of man? The learned Shuckford, though an advocate for the early invention of the art, says, "that men should immediately fall on such a project, to express sounds by letters, and expose to sight all that may be said, or thought, in about twenty characters variously placed, exceeds the highest notion we can have of the capacities with which we are endowed." It is truly a wonderful art. And it was perfect from the beginning; nor has there been any improvement from the days of Moses to the present day. With one exception, all the Hebrew letters are found in the decalogue. Every guttural, labial, lingual, and dental sound is here disclosed.

Nor is it less worthy of note, that not an instance is known in which any man, or set of men, ever invented the use of letters by their own unaided powers.

I am not disposed, therefore, to receive the opinion that the origin of letters is lost in time; or that the art rose from small beginnings, and was gradually improved as the wants of men demanded it; but that it was revealed to men by God himself. Nor is this at all a novel conclusion. Among the Christian fathers, Clemens Alexandrinus, Cyril, and St. Augustin; and among the moderns, Mariana, a learned Romanist, Dr. John Owen, Sir Charles Woollesly, Drs. Winder, M'Knight, and others, held the opinion that Moses introduced the first alphabet.[1]

In relation to the period when the art of writing was communicated to other nations, as might be well supposed, different views have been expressed by different men. It is obvious that the Hebrews had no opportunity of communicating with other nations either during their forty years in the desert, or the time of Joshua's conquests or government. The period between the death of Joshua and the government of Samuel, as characterized by the reign of the Judges, was marked by great corruption and degeneracy. Milman, in his history of the Jews, well describes it as "the heroic age of Jewish history, abounding in wild adventure and desperate feats of individual valour." During this rude and unsettled period, a period of above four hundred years, they were scarcely fitted to receive

[1] See Winder.

or extend instruction of any kind. Under the government of Samuel, the literature of the nation may be said to have taken its rise. He founded a school of the prophets; he was the author of the earlier part of the life of David; and he wrote a treatise on civil government, which was called "the manner of the kingdom," for the instruction of Saul, the first king. David was a prince of highly cultivated mind, and greatly elevated the nation in arts and in arms. It was not, however, until the distinguished reign of Solomon that the Hebrew state attracted the attention of the surrounding nations, and became as remarkable for its wisdom as for its wealth and splendour. The reign of this prince was the zenith of Israel's glory. It was to the Hebrew nation what the present century has been to Germany; what the reign of Anne was to Britain; the reign of Louis XIV to France; the pontificate of Leo X to Italy; the reign of Augustus Cæsar to Rome; and the influence of Pericles to Greece. Solomon's court was the most splendid and enlightened court in the world. The whole country of Palestine was then classic ground. It was a time of profound peace; and the people were no longer the sport of the sword and the pestilence. Agriculture and commerce, lucrative occupation of every kind, and unobstructed international intercourse had rendered their land and their metropolis "the beauty of perfection, and the joy of the whole earth." Never had the nation so favourable an opportunity of forming and executing the noblest and most useful designs, and of extending its influence for the melioration of our race. It is most probable that it was not until about this period that the knowledge of letters passed from the Hebrews to the pagan world, and especially to the Phœnicians, the Egyptians, and the Chaldeans; each of which had peculiar facilities for becoming acquainted with the Hebrew language.[1]

The researches of able chronologists give weight to this opinion. David and Solomon were contemporaneous with Hiram in Phœnicia; with Hadadezer in Assyria; and according to Sir Isaac Newton, with Sesostris in Egypt, and Cadmus in Greece. Not far from this period, we find that letters were in-

[1] See Winder.

troduced into different pagan nations; and they gradually became the habitation of genius and learning as they were more or less remote from the Holy Land.

May we not then regard Judea as the birth-place of letters? Her language was a sort of universal language; her central position had been reserved by the God of nations in his division of the earth, for the express purpose of making her the depository of knowledge; and her prophets, her historians, and her poets were eagerly sought after. She was the most powerful and the most accomplished nation; and the active, imposing character of her inhabitants ensured to her a commanding influence. Her priests were learned men, and their cities were like so many universities. Nor is it unreasonable to believe, that to her belonged the distinction of serving as a model to her more barbarous neighbours.

The apostle once said, "I am a debtor to the Jew." And so is the whole literary world. If the press is the palladium of civilized society; if letters are the great hope of its advancement, and the only effectual security against its return to barbarity and wretchedness; what do we not owe to this now scattered but once concentrated and enlightened people? Whatever may be the benefits of this great art upon the intellectual and social character, and upon individual and public prosperity, may we not say, the honour of it belongs to the Hebrews—to Moses their great lawgiver—to the Bible? Not until this treasury of knowledge was unlocked were the riches of thought diffused through the nations. It is not undeserved homage to this sacred book to say that philosophers and great men of other times lighted their torch in Zion, and the altars of learning caught their first spark from the flame that glowed within her Temple.

The tongue of man is the glory of his frame; and the use of it was taught him by his Maker. These mysterious letters, too, are from him. When we take up a profitable book, we should recollect whose hand first inscribed the living characters. Every time we take our pen, too, to inscribe these characters on the page of business, or of friendship, we should recollect with gratitude that we owe the wonderful art to Him from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift.

LECTURE II.

THE LITERARY MERIT OF THE SCRIPTURES.

WE do not claim for the Scriptures simply the honour of having given the world its letters. This they might have done, and have left the field of literature barren, and with all the difficulties of cultivating it to be overcome by the tedious toil of successive generations. But they open before you a "goodly land," everywhere fruitful and luxuriant, and ripened already to a full harvest. Mountain and meadow and pure streams diversify and adorn its surface; and at each step a mine is disclosed yielding, as it is explored, new and exhaustless treasures. Who would not be a wayfarer amid such scenes?

If the Bible is of human origin, it must certainly be regarded as the most wonderful effort of created intelligence. That there should be so perfect a book in so early a state of the world; that no volume, either ancient, or modern and written in the most advanced and cultivated condition of human society, should compare with this ancient record, originating in a comparatively rude age; is to my own mind a fact not easily accounted for on the principles of infidelity. The world is filled with books that are the product of the mightiest sons of genius; but they are sterile and jejune, deformed and ungainly, in comparison with the riches of thought, the extent of research, the accuracy, the grace and beauty, which distinguish the Bible.

Without the Scriptures the world would be profoundly ignorant of some of the most important and interesting points of historical enquiry. Within the narrow compass of the first few chapters in the book of Genesis, we are furnished with a distinct and connected history of more than two thousand of the earliest years of time. The narrative of Moses completely

covers that period of history which with other nations is called *fabulous*, and which is merged in the regions of fabrication and conjecture. There are no ages of uncertainty here—no regions of fable—no chasm. From the first dawn of the creation down to the capture of Babylon by Cyrus, the entire period is filled up with events, the effects of which are widely extended over the earth and are visible to the present hour.

There are multitudes of facts and phenomena, both in the natural and moral world that never could be accounted for but for the Mosaic history; while a slight acquaintance with that history shows us how exactly it is accordant with the existing state of things both in the physical and moral creation. The creation of the material universe, about which so much has been written by wise men, and than which nothing is more indicative of folly, is here given so succinctly and so philosophically that all the quibbles of infidelity, and all the researches of natural science, instead of invalidating, have only served to strengthen and confirm our confidence that the narrator was supernaturally taught of God.

The ancient account of the creation of the world among the Chaldeans was, that there was a time when all was water and darkness, and in these were contained the original elements of all future existence; that a woman was the great presiding mind; that Belus clove her asunder, and formed earth of the one part, and heaven of the other; that he divided the darkness, separated earth from heaven, and arranged the order of the universe; that he ordered one of the gods to cut off his head, to mix the blood which flowed from the wound with earth, and of this mixed mass to form men and animals; and after this he framed the stars and planets, and thus finished the production of all things. This account is indeed sufficiently ridiculous, and yet it the sober narrative of Berosus, who was a priest in the temple of Belus at Babylon, who lived in the time of Alexander the Great, and was the Author of the history of Chaldea. The Phœnician Theogony of Sanconiathan is still more ludicrous, and too absurd to be narrated in an intelligent assembly; but may be found in Eusebius, and Winder's 'History of Knowledge.' The Egyptian account as

given by Diodorus Siculus, was that all beings originally existed in a chaotic state; that the sun and stars were formed by the continual agitation of the air ascending upwards; that the gross and earthy matter sunk below, and was gradually made hard by the heat of the sun; that animals were created from the heat and moisture, and eventually perpetuated, each, its own species. And what was the Theogony of the Greeks —the learned Greeks? I may not utter it for its debasing impurities. Compared with these, and others such as these, how simple, how rational the narrative of Moses. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth!" Here is a cause equal to the wonderful effect, while every view of the effect leads to adoring admiration of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the mighty Author.

The formation of man too with all his full-grown powers of body and of mind—primeval rectitude, federal character and fall—the promised Saviour and his predicted victories—the patriarchal age—the deluge—the foundation of the new world —the settlement of the mother country—the division of the earth—the confusion of tongues, and the dispersion—the early settlement of Egypt—the rise and fall of the Assyrian Empire, even to the names of all its successive Princes from the first to the last—the origin, peculiarities and overthrow of the Hebrew State—the progress and decline of Canaan, Persia, and Media, are all familiar topics of biblical history. Ancient cities too —Thebes,—the No-Ammi of Na[illegible]—Nineveh, Jerusalem, Babylon, with all that rendered them the wonders of the world, would be traced to the remote darkness of the fabulous age but for the Old Testament. The only authentic history of these remote events and kingdoms is in the Pentateuch and in the Prophets. Before the days of Moses there were no historical records either in Assyr[illegible] Egypt, Phœnicia, Chaldea, or Greece. No other historia[illegible] lived at so remote a period as the exodus from Egypt. Dr. Winder shows, at considerable length, that Moses is the only man who had any considerable materials for Egyptian history; as the ancient learning of Egypt must have been chiefly lost by the excision of the first born and the disasters of the Red sea. Since the priests, the

more common depositories of learning, usually attended in their wars, the people who were left behind must have been chiefly the common people; so that for a long time after this disaster, Egypt was involved in ignorance and darkness; nor is this nation subsequently mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures until the reign of Solomon. "Moses was the father of history." Infidels have affirmed, there were astronomical calculations in Babylon that reached back to a period much farther than the Mosaic history; which therefore, if true, invalidate the entire account given by Moses. This assertion has received a very conclusive refutation from the astronomical calculations of Bedford. But there is a fact stated by Gillies, in his history of Greece, that confirms the calculations of Bedford. This historian states, that after the conquest of Babylon by Alexander, he "eagerly demanded the astronomical calculations that had been carefully preserved in that ancient capitol about nineteen centuries. By the order of Alexander they were faithfully transcribed and transmitted to Aristotle," who was the preceptor of this Prince. And "they re-mounted to twenty-two hundred and thirty-four years beyond the Christian era," a period not even so remote as the deluge. There is no history that can be so safely relied on, or that is so ancient as the Mosaic history. Every other attempt at history until the reigns of David and Solomon is but a mass of shapeless re-arranged tradition, as corrupt as it is fabulous. Long after this time indeed, the pages of writers esteemed the most authentic, are disfigured by absurd and disgusting fictions. This defect in the annals of earlier times must be everywhere and deeply felt, if we exclude the information obtained from the Bible. There only is the deficiency supplied. Sanconiathan, Berosus, Ctesias, and Manetho are the oldest human historians; but "Moses was five hundred years before the first, and more than a thousand before the last."

It deserves also to be remembered that the chronology of the Bible is definite. The most authentic ancient historians abound with chronological inconsistencies. Sir Isaac Newton has clearly detected great errors in the system of pagan chronology

by bringing his powerful mind to the study of the Bible.[1] The authors of profane history are greatly indebted in this particular to the chronology of the Scriptures. By a careful comparison of its history with its prophecies, a standard is formed by which the chronological errors of pagan historians have been rectified, and the order of a great multitude of dates and events satisfactorily determined. Nor is the facility of doing this at all diminished by the discrepancy between the chronology of the Hebrew and Samaritan text and the Septuagint. Geography and chronology have been well called the "two eyes of history." Nor can our notions of history be otherwise than exceedingly confused where the series of events does not lie before us in the due and proper order of time.

What adds peculiar interest to the historical notices of the Scriptures is that they are so replete with instruction on the great and important subject of efficient and final causes, as well as moral causes generally. They bring forward in bold relief the superintendent and all-governing providence of the Most High:—as in the history of Joseph, the revolt of the ten tribes, and the books of Esther and Daniel. They exhibit a luminous picture of the human character in every age and country with which they are conversant:—as in the history of the antediluvian world and the entire history of the Jewish nation. They present a history of the divine purposes and the divine government, and every where illustrate the great truth, that "there is a God that judgeth in the earth," and that he "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." They furnish a history of the church for more than four thousand years. They present as their great subject the all-absorbing work of Redemption. They have an object which they never lose sight of; a cause to which they are always subservient; principles which are developed with some new accession of strength and beauty on every page; a Hero not of mortal nature, whom they every where honour; a deity, not of the poet's creation, whom they worship with a pure ritual, and to whom they ascribe eternal praise.

[1] For information on this subject, see the different Encyclopedias, Bedford's Chronology, and Winder.

Nor need we hesitate in saying, that no work possesses such literary merit generally and that has equal claims to be considered as the standard of a polished and useful literature. The characteristic style of the Bible is, that it is always adapted to the subjects of which it speaks. A chaste, terse, nervous diction distinguishes all its compositions. It is strongly marked by its simplicity, its strength, and often its unrivalled sublimity and beauty. Its words and figures, though not a few of the latter are altogether new, and probably never would have been thought of except by the inspired mind who conceived them, and are even symbolical and hieroglyphic, when once presented, are seen and felt to accord with the familiar conceptions of men. Its manner of writing with regard to the choice and arrangement of words, is at all times dignified and serious, and at a great remove from the pomp and parade of artificial ornament. Everywhere we see that its great object is to inculcate truth, and that it uses words only to clothe and render impressive the thoughts it would convey. There is both rhetoric and inspiration in the Bible; but amid all the boldness and felicity of its inventions, there is no overdoing—no making the most of every thing—no needless comment—but every thing is plain, concise, and unaffectedly simple.

In the historical compositions of the Scriptures we have the most simple, natural, affecting, and well told narratives in the world. Witness the history of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and his family—the recapitulations in Deuteronomy—the narratives of Ezra and Nehemiah—the story of the Saviour's trial and crucifixion, and the life of the apostle Paul. For fidelity and impartiality, for unvarnished truth, for the choice of its matter, its unity, its concise and graphic descriptions of character, and above all its usefulness, the historical parts of the Bible are without a parallel. No critic can say of them, They are too monotonous—too wordy—or too uniformly stately, tragical, and emphatic. The characters walk and breathe. They are nature and nothing but nature. By a single stroke of the pencil you often have their portrait. You see them. You hear them. Every scene in which you behold them is a fit subject for the painter. And does it not deserve remark,

that the finest subjects for historic painting within the entire circle of the Fine Arts have been selected from the Scriptures? Such are Lot and his two daughters hastened by the angels out of Sodom, and the Finding of Moses on the Nile, by Rembrant — Moses striking the Rock, by Poussin — the Deluge, by Trumbull—Belshazzar's Feast, by Martin—the Transfiguration and the Madonna, by Raphael—Moses receiving the Law —Abraham and Isaac, at the foot of the mountain—Paul's Shipwreck —Christ Rejected—Death on the Pale Horse, by West—the Last Supper, by Davinci—Christ in the Garden, by Guido—the Fall of the Damned—and the Resurrection of the Just, by Rubens. Raphael, the first painter in the world, and who was employed so extensively by Leo X, painted chiefly scriptural subjects. His famous Cartoons are all scriptural themes. Nor may it be denied, that these and other similar subjects have been selected with inimitable judgment and taste. None knew better how to make or prize the selection than these illustrious artists; for none brought to the selection minds better furnished, or more intensely devoted to the object. I look upon it as no unmeaning compliment to the Bible, that the best artists have awarded to it this distinguished honour; and one reason why they have done so obviously is, that profane history furnishes no such themes.

Nor do I know any thing to equal the didactic and argumentative parts of the Scriptures, especially as they are presented in some of the Prophets; in the discourses of our Saviour, and the epistles of Paul. Read the instructions of the greatest of all teachers to Nicodemus: advert to his conversation with the woman of Samaria: study his argument to the complaining Jews in the temple, and to the deceived multitude that followed him across the sea to Capernaum: turn to his discourse to the people at Nazareth: and then read his farewell address to his disciples. Where will you find so rich a vein of thought, argument, and alternate rebuke and tenderness? There is nothing in the compositions of Addison, the most neat and nervous of all the English classics, to be compared with these, or with the Sermon on the mount. Nor is there anything in the finest orations and treatises of the most celebrated masters of anti-

quity, so eloquent as the glowing prediction of the great apostle of the restoration of his countrymen, or his triumphant argument for the resurrection, or his bold and exquisitely wrought description of the privileges of the people of God. You recollect how he closes the first. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again! For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever!" I cannot do justice to his illustration and argument relative to the second, without rehearsing a part of it. "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass that is written, death is

swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" When this author first presented these epistles to the world, I have no doubt they produced impressions of the deepest interest, if not of high astonishment. Some of you can recollect the emotions with which you read them more than twenty years ago; and they excite the same emotions still, except that they are more enlightened and vigorous. You well recollect also the close of his description of the privileges of the children of God: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who shall be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created existence shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." There is a noble specimen of lofty argument and expostulation also in one of the early books of the Old Testament which I may not pass over in silence. "Gird up thy loins now like a man. I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Wilt thou also dis-

annul my judgments? Wilt thou condemn me that thou mayst be righteous? Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency, and array thyself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath, and behold every one that is proud and abase him. Look on every one that is proud and bring him low, and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together, bind their faces in secret. Then will I also confess unto thee, that thine own right hand hath saved thee!" There are several fine points in this passage, but none more exquisitely fine than this,—"Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath, and behold every one that is proud, and abase him! Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low!" It is a lofty challenge from God to the arrogance and power of man. O how impotent compared with the Almighty One! There needs but a look from God to level the proudest worm. I know not where to find passages of equal force, sublimity, and simplicity out of the Bible. And they are but specimens from almost innumerable passages equally brilliant. There is no vapidness in such passages as these, which palls on the taste. Their flowers do not fade, nor does their fruit lose its freshness. The sacred writers differ in this respect from all others. These dissertations have long been published to the world; but they have lost none of their power, none of their grandeur and beauty. They are always new, and more and more deeply interest a classical mind the oftener they are read and the better they are known. No matter how often you read them, the last perusal leaves the highest relish behind it.

One of the most eminent critics has said, that "devotional poetry cannot please." If it be so, then has the Bible "carried the dominion of poetry into regions that are inaccessible to worldly ambition." It has "crossed the enchanted circle," and by the beauty, boldness, and originality of its conceptions, has given to devotional poetry a glow, a richness, a tenderness, in vain sought for in Shakspere or Cowper, in Scott or Byron. Where is there poetry that can be compared with the song of Moses at his victory over Pharaoh; with the Psalms of David; with the Song of Solomon, and with the Prophecies of Isaiah?

Where is there an elegiac ode to be compared with the song of David upon the death of Saul and Jonathan, or the Lamentations of Jeremiah? Where in ancient or modern poetry is there a passage like this? "In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face: the hair of my flesh stood up.— It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof. An image was before mine eyes. There was silence. And I heard a voice saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God; shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold he putteth no trust in his servants, and his angels he chargeth with folly. How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, and who are crushed before the moth!" Men who have felt the power of poetry, when they have marked the "deep working passion of Danté," and observed the elevation of Milton as he "combined image with image in lofty gradation," have thought that they discovered the indebtedness of these writers to the poetry of the Old Testament. But how much more sublime is Isaiah than Milton! How much more enkindling than Danté is David! How much more picturesque than Homer is Solomon, or Job! Like the rapid, glowing argumentations of Paul, the poetic parts of the Bible may be read a thousand times, and they have all the freshness and glow of the first perusal. Where, in the compass of human language, is there a paragraph, which, for boldness and variety of metaphor, delicacy and majesty of thought, strength and invention, elegance and refinement, equals the passage in which "God answers Job out of the whirlwind"? What merely human imagination, in the natural progress of a single discourse, and apparently without effort, ever thus went down to "the foundations of the earth"—stood at "the doors of the ocean"—visited "the place where the day-spring from on high takes hold of the uttermost parts of the earth"—entered into "the treasures of the snow and the hail"—traced the path of the thunder-bolt—and, penetrating the retired chambers of nature, demanded, "Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of the dew?" And how bold its

flights, how inexpressibly striking and beautiful its antitheses, when, from the warm and sweet Pleiades, it wanders to the sterner Orion, and in its rapid course, hears the "young lions crying unto God for lack of meat"—sees the war-horse pawing in the valley—descries the eagle on the crag of the rock—and in all that is vast and minute, dreadful and beautiful, discovers and proclaims the glory of Him who is "excellent in counsel and wonderful in working"! The style of Hebrew poetry is everywhere forcible and figurative beyond example. The book of Job stands not alone in this sententious, spirited, and energetic form and manner. It prevails throughout the poetic part of the Scriptures; and they stand confessedly the most eminent examples to be found of the truly sublime and beautiful. I confess I have not much of the feeling of poetry. It is a fire that is enkindled at "the living lamp of nature," and glows only on a few favoured altars. And yet I cannot but love the poetic associations of the Bible. Now, they are sublime and beautiful, like the mountain torrent, swollen and impetuous by the sudden bursting of the cloud. Now they are grand and awful as the stormy Galilee, when the tempest beat upon the fearful disciples. And again, they are placid as that calm lake when the Saviour's feet have pressed upon its waters and stilled them into peace.

There is also a sublimity, an invention in the *imagery* of the Bible that is found in no other book. Here you see "a land shadowing with wings"—a "star coming out of Jacob, and a sceptre arising out of Israel—the "lion of the tribe of Judah" —and the "tongue of the Egyptian sea."—You read of "New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven"—of a "rainbow round about the throne"—of a "sea of glass"—and of a "woman clothed with the Sun, and the Moon under her feet." Here you have allegory, apologue, parable, and enigma, all clearly understood and enforcing truth with a strong and indelible impression. Here you have significant actions uttering volumes of instruction; as when "Jesus called a little child and set him in the midst of his disciples and said, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"—as when he cursed the barren

fig-tree—as when he "washed his disciples feet." And where is there a *comparison* like this,—"And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together." Where is there a description like this,—"And I saw an angel standing in the Sun—and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the flowls that fly in the midst of heaven, come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the Great God." Or where is there a sentence like the following,—"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them."

English literature is no common debtor to the Bible. In what department of English literature may not the difference be discovered between the spirit and sentiments of Christian writers and those who have drawn all their materials of thought and of ornament from Pagan writers? In the language of an anonymous writer, "Not to say that antiquity furnishes no example of a philosopher who could think like Newton; or a moralist who could illustrate human obligation like Edwards or Johnson; we find a proof of the superiority of Christian principles even in those works of imagination which are deemed scarcely susceptible of influence from religion. The common romance and the novel, with all their fooleries and ravings, would be more contemptible than they are, did they not sometimes undesignedly, catch a conception, or adorn a character from the rich treasury of revelation. And the more splendid fictions of the poet derive their highest charm from the evangelical philanthropy, tenderness, and sublimity that invest them. But for the Bible, Homer and Milton might have stood upon the same shelf, equals in morality, as they are competitors for renown. Young had been ranked with Juvenal; and Cowper had united with Horace and with Ovid to swell the tide of voluptuousness."

There is not a finer character, nor a finer description in all the works of Walter Scott than that of Rebekah in Ivanhoe. And who does not see that it owes its excellence to the Bible? Shakspere, Byron, and Southey are not a little indebted for some of their best scenes and inspirations to the same source. At the suggestion of a valued friend, I have turned my

thoughts to the parallel between Macbeth and Ahab—between Lady Macbeth and Jezebel—between the announcement to Macduff of the murder of his family, and that to David of the death of Absalom by Joab—to the parallel between the opening of the Lamentations of Jeremiah and Byron's apostrophe to Rome as the Niobe of nations—to the parallel between his ode to Napoleon and Isaiah's ode on the fall of Sennacherib—and also to the resemblance between Southey's chariot of Carmala in the Curse of Kehama, and Ezekiel's vision of the wheels; and have been forcibly impressed with the obligations of this class of writers to the sacred Scriptures.

May it not be doubted whether scholars have been sufficiently sensible of their obligations to our common English Bible. It is the purest specimen of English, or Anglo-Saxon to be found in the world. It was made by the order of James the Ist, in 1607, by forty-seven of the most able and learned men of Westminster, Oxford, and Cambridge. It has stood the test of two hundred and thirty years' experience and is a noble monument of the integrity, fidelity, and learning of its venerable translators. Addison remarks "There is a certain coldness in the phrases of European languages, compared with the oriental forms of speech. The English tongue has received innumerable improvements from an infusion of Hebraisms, derived out of the practical passages in holy writ. They warm and animate our language, give it force and energy, and convey our thoughts in ardent and intense phrases. There is something in this kind of diction, that often sets the mind in a flame and makes our hearts burn within us." Nor has it been at all improved by American philologists. Was it too much for a learned Commentator to say, "Our translators have not only made a standard translation; but they have made their translation the standard of our language. The English tongue in their day was not equal to such a work. But God enabled them to stand as upon Mount Sinai, and *crane up* their country's language to the dignity of the originals; so that after the lapse of two hundred years, the English Bible, with very few exceptions, is the standard of the purity and excellence of the English tongue."

The Bible has also been the instrument of preserving and diffusing classical learning among the most polished and literary nations. On the subversion of her fairest temples, ofttimes has literature taken refuge in the asylums of Christianity. Since the Ark that once contained and preserved this sacred book was destroyed, this hallowed volume has been itself the ark in which were contained and preserved for the long night of a thousand years, and amid the rude assaults of barbarous nations, "the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." More than once, when ignorance has enslaved the human mind, has the Bible stricken off its fetters. The Scriptures constrain men to be learned. So that while on the one hand, literature has nothing to lose, but much to gain from the Bible, the Bible has much to gain, and nothing to lose from a solid literature. "A little learning," says lord Bacon, "tendeth to atheism; but more bringeth us back to religion." It is for the interests of religion to encourage the pursuit of science and literature in every form and department. The more the Bible is brought to the test of intellectual research, the more abundant will be the evidence of its superiority. From the comparative study of languages, from the natural history of the human race, from the whole circle of natural sciences, from early history, from oriental literature, from the most rigid scrutiny of its most acute and learned enemies, it has nothing to fear. The ignorance of its friends may give its enemies a short-lived triumph; but it shall be as ignoble as it is momentary; and the weapons by which it has been accomplished shall be broken and thrown back, recoiling on the heads of those who wield them. Should some future Julian arise, who should debar the friends of the Bible the lights of science, the unbelieving world and the powers of darkness might be emboldened to assail it with new confidence. But I trust in God that time is past. And were it possible that the world could again be subjected to the caprice of a single man, and receive its laws from a despot, Jesus Christ is, as he ever has been, "head over all things to the church," and will make all things subservient to her interests. The power of despots shall be extended or diminished as it shall ultimately extend or diminish the power of the Gospel.

Wise men of the East shall again offer incense to the child of Mary. The Scribe and the Rabbi shall yet wreathe garlands for the ark of the covenant. The science of France and the learning of Germany shall become as truly tributary to the cause of truth and holiness, as was the gold of Ophir. And the most illustrious classics of antiquity shall gather their freshest bays to adorn the temples once crowned with thorns.

If it were for nothing but their literary merit therefore, these Scriptures claim the earnest attention of the young. I know of no standard by which the character of literary and scientific men may be so safely and successfully formed. The more he reads, the more, I am confident, an accomplished scholar will study the Bible. There are no finer English scholars than the men educated north of the Tweed. And there are none who from their childhood are so well acquainted with the Bible. I have heard it said that the characteristic wit of Scotchmen is attributable to their early familiarity with the Proverbs of Solomon. No well informed man, no well educated family is ignorant of the Bible. We can better afford to part with every other book from our family libraries, our schools, and colleges, than this finished production of the Infinite mind.

LECTURE III.

THE OBLIGATIONS OF LEGISLATIVE SCIENCE TO THE BIBLE.

OUR last lecture expatiated upon the literary merit of the sacred writings. We purpose at the present opportunity, to contemplate the influence this remarkable book has exerted upon human laws—upon the science of legislation, and the great principles of jurisprudence. From the nature of the subject, it will be seen that it will more tax the sober thought of my audience than the previous lecture if it does not even trespass somewhat upon their patience.

As a general remark, it is no doubt true, that, like every other science, law has advanced gradually to its present state of improvement. But this remark is to be received with some qualification. That the Mosaic code was the first written law ever delivered to any nation no man will deny. And yet it was delivered in a state of high perfection.

Theoretical philosophers who have set aside or forgotten the inspiration of the Scriptures, have taught that the earlier codes of law,—codes designed for men in the wildest state, and at a period of the world when their wants were few and simple, their rights acknowledged, and their crimes had scarcely begun to be flagitious,—were necessarily very limited and very imperfect. They tell us that the first regulations of human society were those domestic rules which the father of a family would have occasion to observe in the control of his household. When men began to unite in villages and cities, these more private regulations would be found inadequate to restrain a more numerous society ; and a body of rules, as well as an authority accompanied by greater power than the paternal, became necessary. They tell us, that afterwards, when towns and cities united

for their common convenience and defence, the judicial regulations necessarily became multiplied; and the supreme authority from which they emanated, and by which they were to be enforced, issued sooner or later in different forms of magistracy. And as the conduct of the wisest and most just men would naturally suggest a rule of conduct to others, so their counsels and advice would gradually acquire force, and be adopted as a general regulation. And hence they tell us, that sages and philosophers were the first authors of laws.

Now, all this proceeds upon an entirely gratuitous assumption; an assumption as contrary to sober uninspired history as it is to the word of God. That assumption is "that the original state of man was exceedingly degraded; that he occupied a rank at first, little, if any, above the beasts of the field; and that having by his own exertions gradually escaped from the state of brutality in which he was originally found, he is in a constant course of improvement." How far this hypothesis is at variance with facts, I leave believers, and indeed I might say, unbelievers, in Divine Revelation to determine. Since the fall of man from that state of primeval integrity and blessedness in which he was created, unaided by wisdom and laws revealed from heaven, the invariable tendency of his nature has been to sink deeper and deeper into darkness and lawless corruption. Hence God gave him law at his first creation; and by oral communications from heaven, guided and instructed him for the first twenty-five hundred years, until he gave the Hebrew nation their memorable code from mount Sinai.

"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" The enactment of wise laws, and the due administration of justice in any community are so intimately interwoven with its best interests, and of such acknowledged importance, that they need not become the topics of remark. Law is the measure of right. It gives every man a rule of action, and prescribes a course of conduct which entitles him to the support and protection of society. It teaches men to know when they commit injury, and when they suffer it. Every just law is dictated by reason and benevolence. Of the authority to command and the obligation to obedience, the founda-

tion or principle, is the happiness of those to whom the rule is directed. "Salus populi suprema lex." None will doubt that the goodness of all laws depends upon their intrinsic rectitude and benevolent influence.

"The hand of time has been passing over the mighty fabric of human laws for four thousand years;" and yet little has been added to the stock of legal science, and little change has been made in the most improved principles of human jurisprudence since the days of Moses. As might have been justly supposed, there have been great improvements in commercial law, because the Hebrews were an agricultural, and not extensively a commercial people. And there have been improvements in international law, because the Hebrews were, by divine command, separated from other nations. Laws also have been changed by the condition of the countries for which they have been enacted; they have been extended in their specifications; they have been modified by the character, customs, religion, soil, position, and pursuits of different nations; but the fundamental principles, the great outline of legislative science, is found in the civil polity of the Jews. The last four books of the Pentateuch contain the foundations of all wise legislation.

We have in the first instance the Moral Law, comprised within the short compass of ten commandments. This law contains the nucleus, the germ of all moral obligation, enforcing the claims of the one only living and true God, as the autocrat of the Hebrew nation, and at the same time presenting a comprehensive statement of the duties which man owes to his fellow man. It was given, not through the intermediate ministry of their legislator, but directly to the assembled nation; not by the voice of angels, but by the voice of the Almighty lawgiver. It was stamped as his own, and he imparted to it a sacredness and authority suited to its high pre-eminence.

"Concerning thy testimonies," says the Psalmist, "I have known that thou hast founded them for ever. I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right." The moral law is built upon firm and immutable foundations. It was not imposed by arbitrary will, but corresponds to truth, to the nature of intelligent beings, and the relations they sustain to-

ward God and one another. It is adapted to all times, and places, and intelligences; is without change or abatement; and is alike fitted to earth and to heaven. It requires what human laws may not require,—perfect holiness; and it forbids what man may not forbid,—all sin. It has a province with which no human code may interfere; for it controls the heart.

It may deserve enquiry, Whether the moral law of the Ten Commandments was merely a moral law for the private government of individuals? Was it not a law contemplating man as about forming a community; and laying down certain rules, not merely fit for individual conscience, but as also the indispensable requisites of a social state? In this sense, they are not merely rules of conduct as to internal conscience, and which make men responsible to God; but rules of social existence, without which human society cannot continue, and which make men responsible to the State. Do they not embody, both rules of conscience and the great principles of union among men, and constitute the vital basis of social organization? These ten commandments are indeed a wonderful code. So comprehensive a summary of the indispensable principles of a social state, and so wonderful a summary of moral duty, never could have been of human invention. This great moral code deserves to stand at the head of all the Mosaic institutions, and through the people to whom it was originally proclaimed, to address its claim to all the nations of men.

Next to this great moral law, there is what may be called the Civil or Political Laws. They differ from the moral law in several important particulars; but in none more than this, that they do not require absolute perfection, nor forbid all sin. In other and plainer language, they tolerate what is wrong, and what the moral law does not tolerate. They tolerate imperfection at heart; for they do not profess to reach the heart. That is done by another law, and by no mere civil, political code. They tolerate imperfection in the life; for no system of human legislation, even though God were its author, would ever attempt to secure even a perfectly blameless exterior. Hence there were usages in the Hebrew nation which were inconsistent with the moral law, and with the general scope and

spirit of the divine oracles, which the *civil* code of the Old Testament did not prohibit to the Hebrew people.

Great complaint has been made against the Old Testament for these connivances; but great injustice has been done to it in this particular. We have said, that every just law is dictated in wisdom. But while it is indispensable to the due administration of justice, that no law should be unjust, it is not indispensable that every just law which may be thought of should be enacted. A civil code may legislate too much, as well as too little. The object of a law should always be attainable, and always of sufficient importance to demand its enactment. It may be to a high degree fit and proper that men, as citizens, should do right in every thing; while it may not be fit and proper, that any system of mere human legislation should require absolute perfection in human conduct. This, as has been before remarked, is the province of a moral and not a civil code. This is the province of the divine lawgiver, acting as the moral governor of men, and not of human legislation. He must do this, or his law would not be holy, just, and good, nor commend itself to the conscience. He cannot do less, however extensive his empire, and however remote the period of time, or ages of eternity to which his government is extended. The great peculiarity of his moral government is, that it is a perfect government, conniving at no kind or degree of wickedness, and adjusting penalty to crime with that perfect precision and exactness of moral balance, that is in all cases proportioned to the measure of its ill desert. But this is not the work of human legislation, unless men may legislate for God, and with the design of securing a sinless community. This were impracticable and visionary. Even were there such a thing as perfect rectitude among men, it would be impossible for any civil code to draw the line between guilt and innocence by any distinct or definite limitations. Nor could justice ever become so active, vigilant, and cautious, as to prevent or punish every instance of wickedness. The difficulty of a civil law in attempting to reach everything wrong is but half. The still greater difficulty also would be, in enforcing such laws when made. Their minuteness would ren-

der them difficult to be known; transgressions would be constant, and the whole business of society would be the discovering, trying, and punishing of offences. Intention too would be the *corpus delicti*, and this would have to be tried by fallible judges, liable to partiality and corruption, and by means of witnesses perhaps still more liable. I can imagine no state of anarchy or contention equal to that which would be produced by civil laws attempting to enforce all that is right, and to prohibit all that is wrong. The basis of all legislation by general rules admits of partial evil for general good; and this is the only practical legislation. Moses, for example, allowed polygamy, because, in that age of the world it was not once thought of as a sin; and the time had not come for him to sunder the ten thousand bonds which existed all over the nation between husbands and wives, parents and children, and suddenly break up the foundations of long established society by enforcing the original law of marriage. And for the same reason he allowed of divorce for other causes than conjugal infidelity, and also because in a state of society where polygamy is allowed, one of the means for gradually preventing polygamy was not to render divorces too difficult.

It is essential to a moral law, as we have before intimated, that it tolerate nothing that is wrong, however strong the reasons for the connivance; while it is essential to the wisdom of every code of civil legislation, that it connive at many things, lest by aiming at too much it defeat its own designs. Take a plain and familiar example. What course would a wise man pursue if he were to form a Civil Code for the Sandwich Islands, or for the colonies on the coast of Africa? God has already proclaimed to them his moral law, requiring perfect holiness. This law the faithful missionary of the cross illustrates and enforces in all the perfection of its precepts, and all the severity of its sanctions. But as a virtuous and wise jurist, he is called upon to modify and change their civil code, by which they shall regulate their mutual intercourse, define rights and trespass and crimes; try criminals, and determine civil actions. It would be puerile to suppose that he would prescribe to them the Ten Commandments, or which would amount to the

same thing, that he would expressly prohibit by penal sanctions everything which is not accordant to the perfect demands of the moral law. He would obviously enquire to what extent it is practicable, expedient, and conducive to the ends of good government to require all that is right, and forbid all that is wrong. While the code which he would establish would enjoin nothing that is sinful, under a sound discretion he would ask, to what extent it might tolerate and suffer some evils, lest it should defeat its own design. Nay, would he not even establish laws to regulate those very evils; to prevent the increase and abuse of them, that ultimately and in a more improved and advanced state of society, they might be wholly eradicated? Now this is what infinite wisdom has done in the civil code of the Hebrews. The moral law he had given them. But that recently enslaved people were about to assume a new character. They were about to be organized into a body politic and to be constituted the Hebrew state. And in this crisis of their history, God himself was their counsellor. He condescended to give them statutes and judgments, and to become the author and framer of their civil and judicial code. And would you deny to him the discretion of a wise jurist? Is it to be supposed that he would conduct so weighty a concern with any lack of wisdom, or any want of regard for the condition and character of the people for whom he was about to legislate? John Locke could write with distinguished ability on the powers of the human mind; but when he comes to discuss the great practical questions of civil government, and to prepare a constitution for a free state, he is like Samson shorn of his strength. The divine wisdom was never more needed by the Hebrew nation than at the commencement of their political existence, just after they had escaped the servitude of Egypt. Cavillers at the political law of the Hebrews seem to have lost sight of the very obvious distinction between their moral and civil code: while a very slight attention to the Scriptures, and to the nature of the case evinces that they were delivered at different times, to different persons, and for widely different purposes. The object of their civil laws is to define and illustrate the doctrine of personal rights; to govern their intercourse in the com-

mon transactions of human life; to extend their influence into the domestic circle, and regulate the reciprocal duties of husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant. And most abundantly do they indicate their author.

We cannot do justice to this part of our subject without entering briefly into some specifications. The caution with which the Mosaic law prevented the accumulation of debt,—the fidelity with which they required the restoration of lost property, —the restoring of property that was injured, or stolen, in the former case to the full amount of its original value, and in the latter to double that amount,—and the distinctness and simplicity of the law of bailment, are replete with instruction to every succeeding generation of men. Any man who carefully reads that beautiful treatise of Sir William Jones on this last subject will see that all the leading principles of the law of bailment there illustrated are found in the law of Moses.[1] In the Mosaic code you find the following law in relation to injuries arising from carelessness and inattention. "If a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein, the owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them; and the dead beast shall be his. And if one man's ox hurt another's that he die; then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the money of it; and the dead ox also they shall divide." This law contains the germ of all the existing refinements of the law of injuries from want of care, and those arising without fault. There is a nice equity in this law, where, upon payment for the damages, "the beast shall be his" who was the occasion of the injury. The division of the loss, too, where neither party is in fault, is a very refined notion of equity. It is the rule at the present day, in the case of the collision of ships; and is both more equitable and more tender than leaving the loss upon that party who, by accident, first sustains it. Dividing the loss also greatly diminished the temptation to quarrel about the probable fault, and to prevent a litigation; and this is a cardinal object of all wise governments.[2] The doctrine of restitution in the cases of theft, of the difference in the degree

[1] Exodus, xxii, 14, 15. [2] Exodus, xxi, 33-35.

of restitution between the selling and killing the stolen ox, or sheep, and its being found in the thief's hand, was both most just and most politic. As the article could be restored, there was no fear of the thief's gaining by a difference of value between the sold or killed ox, and those to be restored.[1] The law of mandatories, or the law concerning property given in charge for safe keeping is not to be surpassed for wisdom and equity; and all the refinements of the law to this day do not carry the principle any further.[2] No rule of damages in cases of seduction is so wise as that in the law of Moses. It is the usual one lawyers now present to juries, where the case is one of real deception.[3] These, and other similar laws are expressive of great wisdom, and have been uniformly honoured by all wise and benevolent legislators.

It has no doubt occurred to the intelligent reader of the Mosaic law that there is a series of tender and sentimental injunctions, the design of which was to form the moral sensibilities of the Hebrews by a standard at once the most refined and honourable. They consist chiefly of precepts directory, to which no penalty is annexed, except that which might be inflicted by the all-governing hand of God in the ordinary dispensations of his providence. But they were designed to exert a powerful influence; to be great moral axioms; to guard men against unnatural obduracy, and hardness of feeling; and be a sort of standing appeal to the tenderness and honour of men in all their mutual intercourse. I allude to such examples as the following. "Thou shalt not vex a stranger, nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Ye shall not afflict any widow, nor fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless." God bound them to act in this matter from an affectionate regard to his authority: and gave them distinctly to understand, that if they refused to do so he himself would become the guardian of the poor, the father of the fatherless, the protector of the helpless orphan, the widow's God, and the

[1] Exodus, xxii, 1-4. [2] Exodus, xxii, 7-15. [3] Exodus, xxii, 16, 17.

avenger of her wrongs. A law like this is an everlasting testimony against the man who neglects the sufferings of his brethren; and though he may have all the religious ardour and zeal of a martyr, it denounces him as a base dissembler. Of the same general character is the injunction, to leave the "forgotten sheaf" in the field in the time of harvest; not "go over the boughs of the olive tree a second time;" nor twice glean the grapes of their vineyard;" but that what remained after the first gathering should be left for "the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow." The same remarks are also pertinent to the rule as to "pledges," forbidding them to "take the upper or nether millstone to pledge," because this was the life, and only remaining means of sustenance to the poor. There is a remarkable delicacy too, a singular refinement of feeling in the law relative to pledges. "When thou dost lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge." You may not enter there to discover the nakedness of the land. Your eye shall not penetrate the miseries of his humble dwelling. Your presence shall not bring the blush of shame upon the face of his mortified family. You shall not have the opportunity of publishing to the world their abjectness and low estate. "Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee." Of the same general character is the law that required a man, if he "met his enemy's ox or his ass going astray to bring it back to him again;" the law that the "wages of every hired labourer should be paid punctually before the going down of the sun;" the injunction against slander and tale bearing; the law against usury; and the law which even guards against hardening the feelings by destroying the bird with her eggs. Now, all this was above any mere philosopher, sage, or hero. These precepts are very touching; they are the finest political morality; and not only very high morality, but very deep sentiment. A leader of a horde of fugitive slaves, who had employed his time in tending sheep upon the mountains of Arabia Petrea, and associating with oppressed makers of bricks, could hardly, of his own undirected wisdom, have been so sentimental in his equity. A collection of the rules of this general charac-

ter would be one of the most striking collections of kind, considerate, and merciful legislation ever known; and can scarcely be believed of a lawgiver so sternly denouncing blood for every crime which struck at the social organization. The combination of the two things proves him not to have been a cruel, and to have been a wise legislator.

The trial of jealousy also is a singular institution among the Hebrews, if actually practised. But there is in it such an appeal to the secret terror of a guilty conscience, as to have prevented any but the innocent from submitting to its apparently harmless portions. How different was this trial to an innocent person from the trials of Ordeal in the dark ages. What innocent wife could walk over burning plough-shares; steep her hands or feet in burning oil; or float, when fettered, in the horse-pond? The poor Jewess had an ordeal which could not hurt the innocent; while the middle ages had ordeals which left the innocent no chance of escape.

So likewise the reference of matters of so much nicety as not to be capable of solution by judges, to the priesthood as a body, and punishing with death a presumptuous contempt of the sentence, was well calculated to protect the ordinary magistrate from the animosity of a losing party, where the question of right was very difficult, and where the losing party would never be satisfied with a mere reason. In modern constitutions it is now necessary to rest the ultimate decision of difficult matters to large bodies, who cannot, from their very multitude, be objects of personal animosity.

After their civil or political laws is their code of Penal Statutes. Law punishes as well as protects; and punishes only to strengthen its protection. In a well governed state, crime is prevented more frequently than punished. To make punishment unnecessary is the great employment of legislative wisdom. There are, I know, some peculiarities in the penal code of the Hebrews which have been the subject of loud complaint. Not a few of these peculiarities are to be accounted for by the fact that they were designed to keep that people distinct from the rest of mankind, and thus prevent their being involved in the idolatry of the pagan world. Infidels have made

themselves merry also at the minuteness of this code. And it may be, that there are some honest but fastidious readers of the Old Testament whose delicacy has been wounded at the rehearsal of some of those very recitals, which have contributed to the formation of that high standard of susceptibility which shrinks from the conception of laws so necessary to this degraded people. When we consider that the Mosaic code was prescribed for a people ignorant of all law; a people who had just emerged from the most abject slavery; a people scarcely beyond the limits of the most loathsome and defiling paganism; we shall cease to wonder at the minuteness of its details, and admire the divine wisdom and condescension in stooping thus to their low condition.

There are several striking points of difference between the Mosaic penal code and that of most modern states. One of these is the requiring of two witnesses for every mortal crime, and that the witnesses should aid in the execution of the guilty. This is a very remarkable provision among such a people as the Hebrews; wonderfully calculated to prevent false testimony, and deserves imitation among the most enlightened judges and legislators. Another is that they had no law of imprisonment, either for debt or for crime. There are but two recorded exceptions to this remark within my knowledge. The one is the keeping of a criminal in custody for a single night, until the will of the Deity could be consulted concerning him, and the other is the appointment of the cities of refuge for the manslayer. Though of ancient usage and origin, imprisonment did not originate with the law of Moses. Instead of imprisoning for crime, the Mosaic code requires the immediate and prompt execution of the law. It was their doctrine that laws were made to be executed; and the divine lawgiver saw fit to decide that there should be no needless delay in the execution. Another striking difference related to the character of the crimes that were punishable with death. They were all either of high moral malignity, or crimes that tended to the subversion of their whole civil polity, and endangered the social existence of the nation. The propriety of the law against them rests upon the same grounds as the punishment of treason and

murder, and is fully justified. In ordinary cases, constituted as that nation was, under a Theocracy, they strike at the root of social existence; and the severity of the punishment against them was in self-defence for the very existence of society. Besides, with a people of extreme simplicity as to property, almost the only punishment must be personal; and as they were emerging from a slavery where the taking of life was probably very common, capricious, and despotic, without severe punishments they were without any. One thing also is quite remarkable in a code where the ignorance of the people and the simplicity of property and social state left the lawgiver few punishments of which to choose and threw him upon stripes or death. I mean the tenderness of blood, and the almost superstitious reverence for human life. The ox that killed a man or woman was stoned, nor should his flesh be eaten; and if he were an unruly ox, and this to be known to his owner, not only was the ox stoned, but his owner was put to death. This is the origin of all those forfeitures in law which arise from the misfortune rather than the crime of the owner, and are called deodand.[1] It is not long since this principle was carried into extensive operation in the laws of England. Whatever personal chattel was the immediate occasion of the death of any reasonable creature was forfeited to the king and applied to benevolent purposes. Bracton states the law to have been, that "all things which, while in motion, caused death, are to be offered to God." But the English law was even more extensive than this. If a man were killed by a fall from a cart or a horse, the cart or horse was forfeited. A well in which a person was drowned was ordered to be filled up under the inspection of the coroner. And among the Athenians, "whatever was the cause of man's death by falling upon him was exterminated, or cast out of the dominions of the republic." There seems to us to be superstition in such a law, but it is a humane superstition. The mind was taught by it to contemplate with horror the privation of human life; and it might not be familiar even with an insensible object which had been the occasion of death, lest that sentiment should be diminished.

[1] Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. I, chapter 8th.

The most corrupt and melancholy state of human society is that in which the mind becomes familiarized to blood; and it is a question of grave import, whether any thing is gained by abrogating even the sacred, and if you please, superstitious, regard to human life which was inspired by this great principle of the Mosaic code.

When you take up the special examples of penal law under this code, you cannot but admire their wisdom. You have in the first place idolatry, and the penalty was death. It was treason against the state to acknowledge any other as king than God. This crime also was always connected with the inhuman and bloody practice of offering human sacrifices. It was of most aggravated enormity, and struck at the very existence of the nation. The next crime is blasphemy, and was punished with death for the same sufficient reason. The next is deliberate and wilful murder. "He that smiteth a man so that he die shall surely be put to death." This was a republication of the law given to Noah, and in my humble judgment is obligatory upon the world in all subsequent ages. The nice distinctions laid down in the Mosaic code between murder and manslaughter are to the present day the just and recognized principles of the law of homicide, and are carried out into every ramification without any new principle. Another mortal crime is smiting a parent. This is a very unnatural, uncommon, and improbable crime. Like several others, it struck at the basis of society, framed as it was on a patriarchal model and organization, which could not continue long on the land given to it unless the simple principles of its organization were severely defended. So of cursing a parent, which was also punished with the same severity. And so of inveterate disobedience to parents for the same reason. So also of incest—sodomy—bestiality—forcible violation—and adultery, and all for the same reason. So also of false pretensions to prophecy for the same reasons with idolatry and blasphemy. So also of witchcraft. Whether witchcraft be imaginary or not, no cruelty is known equal to that committed by pretenders to this mystery. Witness the medicine men of our own western Indians. In an ignorant body of slaves, without intelligence

and subject to superstitions, pretensions to witchcraft were likely to be most disastrous to the happiness of the people, and very dangerous to the government: and I would at this day, legislating for our Indians, or for negroes subject to Obi superstition, punish conjuring with death, quite as readily as for any crime short of actual murder, or treason. The only other crimes punishable with death by the Mosaic code were man-stealing, Sabbath-breaking, and contumacious resistance against the supreme authority of the State. The time was, and that less than two hundred years ago, when by the laws of England, *one hundred and forty-eight crimes* were punishable with death. By the Mosaic code there are seventeen. Let the profane cease from their rebukes of the penal statutes of Moses!

There is one fact in relation to the Mosaic code which is a severe rebuke to modern governments. No injury simply affecting property, no invasion of personal rights whatever, could draw down upon an Israelite an ignominious death. Mammon was not the god of the Mosaic law. That code respected moral depravity more than gold. Moral turpitude and the most atrocious expressions of moral turpitude, these were the objects of its unsleeping severity.

> "Mammon leads us on,
> Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell
> From heaven; for e'en in heaven his looks and thoughts
> Were always downward bent, admiring more
> The riches of heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
> Than ought divine or holy."—

Nor is it a slight commendation of that code, that its laws were equal. Ye "shall have one manner of law as well for the stranger as for one of your own country." Every man in the community had the same protection from the penal laws.

Not a little has been said against the law of retaliation, or the *lex talionis*, as it is enjoined in this code. But has it not been hastily said? No man doubts that, as the law of individual and private revenge, it is wrong. It is in this view, and only in this view, that it is condemned by the Saviour, and superseded by the injunction, "Resist not evil." No man

may take the law into his own hands, and become at pleasure the avenger of his own wrongs. But where is its severity, or inequitableness, as the adjudicated decision of a legal tribunal? The *lex talionis* in relation to deliberate and premeditated crimes is just, and it is not certainly impolitic. "Thou shalt give life for life." Nor do I see any injustice or inexpediency in punishing deliberate maiming by a similar judicial maiming. No man can say, it is not the measure of punishment most consonant to natural equity. As applied to perjury, a crime always of great and studied premeditation, there is a strong propriety in its being rigidly executed, and in doing to the perjurer "as he had thought to have done unto his brother."

Nor let the conscientious reader of the Mosaic law be induced to imagine that there is any thing either in the civil or penal code of the Hebrews that requires and justifies sin. It is not so. Great injustice has been done in this particular to the Old Testament, as I have remarked before. There is a difference between a moral and a judicial code, even though proceeding from the same source; and though what the former may not allow, the latter may not require, yet what the former may forbid, the latter may leave unnoticed, and even regulate and control. It is not necessary that a code of civil laws should adjudicate upon every moral evil. It is not best that it should. Notwithstanding all that has been said and written, there is no evidence to my mind that there is any thing in the laws of Moses which countervails the unchanging principles of moral rectitude. Sometimes you find the Saviour, when commenting on that code, giving the preference to a moral precept over a positive institution, but this is no evidence that the positive institution was sinful. Moses "suffered some things for the hardness of the hearts of the people," which, in a subsequent age and a different state of society he would not have suffered; but this is no evidence that what he judicially suffered he morally approved. Not an instance can be found in which the divine command required that which can, upon any fair construction, be regarded as a violation of that rule of right, which is founded in the nature and relation of things, and is written in every human heart. The Jews in the time of Christ had

erroneous views of the laws of Moses, and perverted them, and needed the exposition which was given them by the Saviour. And not a few at the present day have erroneous views of the instructions of Christ, and pervert them, and need to be taught that they are perfectly consistent with the instructions of Moses. The Gospel is in advance of the Law, but not in opposition to the Law. Moses wrote of Christ, and if we believe the words of Christ, we shall believe the writings of Moses.

The Jews were a favoured people. Their penal laws are so much distinguished for discretion, humanity, equity, and mildness, that they cannot but challenge the admiration of every intelligent jurist. Let them be compared with Hales' Pleas of the Crown, and it is no difficult matter to see on which side the advantage lies. Nothing escapes their notice. They guard the morals as well as the persons of the community. It were well if every crowded city had as good a system of sanitary regulations as the camp of Israel. The uniform tendency of their whole system of jurisprudence was to promote a good understanding between man and man; and the great object of their police the prevention rather than the punishment of crime. Moses is not less truly the great lawgiver than the first historian. The surrounding and contemporaneous nations were far in the rear of this favoured people in every department of legislative knowledge. Chaldea, Egypt, Phœnicia, Media, Persia, then under the sovereignty of Chedorlaomer, had every thing to learn on this subject from the Hebrews. "What nation," says the God of Israel to his chosen people, "what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, as all this law which I set before you this day?"

Men do not always follow ancient customs because they are wise. And yet is there no doubt that many succeeding ages, as well as those that were contemporaneous, were deeply indebted to the Mosaic institutions. Dr. Graves, in his admirable lectures on the Pentateuch, says, that "the Mosaic code must have been generally known in those eastern countries from which the most ancient and celebrated legislators and sages derived the model of their laws." Moses indeed labours to impress this thought upon his countrymen as a powerful

motive for a careful observance of their institutions. "Keep therefore and do them, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations which shall hear of all these statutes, and say surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." The lawgivers of nations bordering on the Jews borrowed many of their institutions from the laws of Moses. This was obviously true of the Egyptians and the Phœnicians. During the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, while the Jews were scattered throughout the kingdom of Persia, their laws were the subject of remark and notoriety; for Haman speaks of them to the king as diverse from the laws of all people." That the extent to which the laws of Greece were indebted to the institutions of Moses was not inconsiderable, may be inferred from the influence of the Hebrew State on the political condition of the world, during the early ages of the Grecian history, as well as from the direct testimony of learned men. Very many points of resemblance between the Grecian laws and customs, and those of the Hebrews, are stated by archbishop Potter, in his 'Antiquities.' The Athenians had a prescribed bill of divorce, and so had the Jews. Among the Jews the father gave names to the children; and such was the custom among the Greeks. The purgation oath among the Greeks strongly resembles the oath of jealousy among the Hebrews. The harvest and vintage festival among the Greeks—the presentation of the best of their flocks, and the offering of their first fruits to the gods—together with the portion prescribed for the priests—the interdiction against garments of diverse colours—protection from violence to the man who fled to their altars—would seem to indicate that the Greeks had cautiously copied the usages of the Jews. And whence was it that no person was permitted to approach the altar of Diana who had touched a dead body, or been exposed to other causes of impurity, and that the laws of Athens admitted no man to the priesthood who had any blemish upon his person, unless from the institutions of Moses? And has not the agrarian law of Lycurgus its prototype, though none of its defects, in the agrarian law of the Hebrews? Many of the Athenian laws in relation to the descent of property, and the prohibited de-

grees of relationship in marriage, seem to have been transcribed by Solon from the laws of Moses. Sir Matthew Hale, in his 'History of the Common Law of England,' affirms, "that among the Grecians the laws of descent resemble those of the Jews."

It will be universally conceded that the Roman or Civil Law, as collected and digested by the order of Justinian, has exerted a powerful influence even on the institutions of modern times. Nor is it to be supposed that this intelligent people, who had long suffered under the evils of unwritten laws, when they turned their attention to the formation of a more certain and permanent code, would not consult the existing laws of the wisest nations. Both ancient and modern writers of Roman history therefore affirm, that the individuals commissioned by the senate and tribunes to form the Twelve Tables were directed to examine the laws of Athens and the Grecian cities. So that the Roman law must have been not a little indebted to the Mosaic.

Sir Matthew Hale remarks, "that among the many preferences which the laws of England have above others, the two principal ones are, the hereditary transmission of property, and the trial by jury." And who does not see that these originated with the Jews? By the law of Moses, the succession in the descending line was all to the sons, except that the oldest son had a double portion. If the son died in his father's lifetime, the grandson succeeded to the portion of his father. Daughters had no inheritance so long as there were sons, or descendants of sons. Where the father left only daughters and no sons, the daughters succeeded equally. And was there nothing in the administration of penal justice among the Hebrews, that suggested at least the trial by jury? I mean the publicity of their trials in the gates of the city, where their judges, though elders and Levites, were taken from the general mass of the citizens. Sir Matthew Hale, in the work to which reference has already been made, has another remark in relation to the influence which the Bible generally has exerted upon the laws of England. In speaking of the difficulties of ascertaining the origin of the common law, among the rest he enumerates the

"growth of Christianity in the kingdom, introducing some new laws, or abrogating some old ones that seemed less consistent with Christian doctrines." A portion of the common law as it now stands was first collected by Alfred the Great; and it is asserted by Sismondi, in his 'History of the Fall of the Roman Empire,' that when this prince "caused a republication of the Saxon laws, he inserted several laws taken from the Judaical ritual into his statutes, as if to give new strength and cogency to the principles of morality." And hence it is no uncommon thing in the early English reporters to find frequent references to the Mosaic law. Sismondi also states that one of the first acts of the clergy under Pepin and Charlemagne of France was to introduce into the legislation of the Franks several of the Mosaic laws found in the books of Deuteronomy and Leviticus.

I need not say that the entire code of civil and judicial statutes throughout New England, as well as throughout those states first settled by the descendants of New England, shows nothing more distinctly than that its framers were familiar with the Bible, and substantially adopted "the judicial laws of God, as they were delivered by Moses, as binding and a rule to all their courts?" And why should not this sacred book, so full of the counsels of wisdom, and itself a law to man, exert a paramount influence on all human laws, wherever it is known and revered? "The Scripture," says the judicious Hooker, "is fraught even with the laws of nature, insomuch that Gratian, defining natural right, termeth it that which the books of the Law and the Gospel do contain. Neither is it vain that the Scripture aboundeth with so great store of laws of this kind; for they are such as we of ourselves could not easily have found out; and then the benefit is not small to have them readily set down to our hands; or if they be so clear and manifest, that no man endued with reason can lightly be ignorant of them, yet the Spirit, as it were borrowing them from the school of nature, and applying them, is not without most singular use and profit for men's instruction."

It was from God himself that one nation and one only immediately received their laws. And they are worthy to be re-

garded as the model for all succeeding ages. There is no comparison between the laws of this people and the laws of other ancient nations, except as the latter were borrowed from the institutions of Moses. The learned Michaelis, who was professor of law in the university of Gottingen, remarks, "that a man who considers laws philosophically, who would survey them with the eye of a Montesquieu, would never overlook the laws of Moses." Goguet, in his elaborate and learned treatise on the 'Origin of Laws,' observes, that "the more we meditate on the laws of Moses, the more we shall perceive their wisdom and inspiration. They alone have the inestimable advantage never to have undergone any of the revolutions common to all human laws, which have always demanded frequent amendments; sometimes changes; sometimes additions; sometimes the retrenching of superfluities. There has been nothing changed, nothing added, nothing retrenched from the laws of Moses for above three thousand years." Milman, in his history of the Jews, remarks, that "the Hebrew lawgiver has exercised a more extensive and permanent influence over the destinies of mankind than any other individual in the annals of the world." It was the opinion of that distinguished statesman and jurist, the late Fisher Ames, *clare et venerabile nomen*, that "no man could be a sound lawyer who was not well read in the laws of Moses."

This venerable code claims our reverence, if it were for nothing but its high antiquity. But it has higher claims. Taken as a whole, it contains more sublime truths, and maxims more essentially connected with the well-being of our race, than all the profane writers of antiquity could furnish. They were perfect at their formation; uniting all that is authoritative in obligation, with all that is benevolent in their tendency, and not less conducive to the glory of the lawgiver than to the happiness of his subjects. That bold personification of law in the abstract made by Hooker, may with strong propriety be applied to the system of legislation revealed in the Bible. "Of law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world. All things in heaven and earth do her homage; the very least as

feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempt from her power. Both angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in a different sort and name, yet all with one uniform consent, admire her as the mother of their peace and joy."

A portion of this law was designed to be authoritatively binding on the Jews alone; another portion of it is equally binding on us; and "though heaven and earth pass away, it shall never pass away."—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." The nature and extent of this law, and our everlasting responsibilities to it as the creatures of God, as intelligent and responsible agents, it becomes us, my young friends gravely to investigate, both as it relates to our destiny in this world and that which is to come. We are not, like the vegetative and animal creation, passive subjects, submitting to the imperative law of our nature, but active, accountable existences, voluntarily obeying or refusing to obey.. All the features of this law we know are "holy, just, and good." Its very penalty is but the sterner accent of love warning us of our danger. Its penalty and precept are both written upon the conscience; and wo be to the transgressor who, because it is no longer the rule of his justification before God, disregards it as the rule of his duty.

LECTURE IV.

THE BIBLE FRIENDLY TO CIVIL LIBERTY.

EVERY considerate friend of civil liberty, in order to be consistent with himself, must be the friend of the Bible. I have yet to learn, that tyrants ever effectually conquered and subjugated a people, whose liberties and public virtue were founded upon the word of God. The American people, I am confident, owe much in this respect to the influence of this great charter of human freedom. I need scarcely solicit the favourable regard of my audience, therefore, when I say to them, that the topic of the present lecture is the influence which the Holy Scriptures have exerted and are adapted to exert upon civil liberty.

Civil liberty is not freedom from restraint. Men may be wisely and benevolently checked and controlled, and yet be free. No man has a right to act as he thinks fit, irrespective of the wishes and interests of others. This were exemption from the restraints of all law, and from all the wholesome influence of social institutions. Heaven itself were not free, if this were freedom. No created being holds any such liberty as this, by a divine warrant. The spirit of subordination, so far from being inconsistent with liberty, is inseparable from it. It is essential to liberty that men should be subjected to the restraints of law; and where this restraint is limited by a wise regard to the best interests of the State, there men are free. Every restraint of natural liberty that is arbitrary and needless; that is imposed on one class of society, merely for the sake of aggrandizing and augmenting the influence of another; every restraint that is not called for, for the purpose of securing to men of every rank and condition their just rights, and of diffusing the spirit of industry, virtue, and peace, is in its own

nature tyranny and oppression. The highest degree of civil liberty is enjoyed where natural liberty is so far only abridged and restrained, as is necessary and expedient for the safety and interest of the society or State. A community may be free, for example, without extending to persons of all ages and both sexes the right of suffrage; without making all eligible to office; without abolishing the distinction of rank; without annihilating the correlative and reciprocal rights and duties of master and servant; without destroying filial subordination and parental claims; without abolishing the punishment of crime; without abjuring the restraints of sanative and maritime law; and without giving up the right of those compulsory services of its subjects which the common weal demands. The civil liberty of men "depends not so much on the removal of all restraint from them, as in the due restraint of the natural liberty of others." There are a few leading principles on which all free governments must forever rest. They are such as the following: That government is instituted for the good of the people—that it is the right and duty of the people to become acquainted with their public interests—that all laws constitutionally enacted, should be faithfully and conscientiously obeyed—that the people, by their representatives, should have a voice in the enaction of these laws—that mild and moderate laws should be invested with energy—that the life, liberty, and property of no man shall be infringed upon, except by process of law—that every man who respects and obeys the laws has a right to protection and support—and that all that is valuable in civil institutions rests on the intelligence and virtue of the people. Such, as far as I am acquainted with them, are the great principles of civil liberty and a free government, let the form of that government be what it may. It may be monarchical, or republican; its constitution may be written, or unwritten; but wherever the duties of magistrates and subjects are prescribed and defined, and their rights protected by the preceding principles, a people may be said to be free.

There never has been any such thing as true freedom among those who were ignorant of the word of God. The great mass of men from the more early ages of the world to the present

time have been controlled by mere arbitrary power. They have known very little of exemption from the arbitrary will of others. In many countries, this exemption has indeed been secured by established laws, and has had the semblance of salutary restraint; while the laws themselves have been lawless and arbitrary; at one time extravagantly severe, and at another extravagantly indulgent, and the mere expression of individual fickleness and authority.

There are few profane historians, with the exception of Herodotus and Thucydides that can be relied upon, which give any account of the world earlier than Alexander. From that time downwards the history of nations becomes more clear, just, and authentic; but from that time upwards, the Bible is the only source of authentic information. There was a general dispersion of mankind into various parts of the world as early as the days of Peleg, and probably just before the death of Noah, and under his direction. Eusebius and Winder give some very plausible reasons, to say the least, for this opinion. The dispersion was completed at the Tower of Babel, when the posterity of Ham, who, under the direction of Nimrod had wrested the plains of Babylon from the descendants of Shem, were scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. The beginning of Nimrod's kingdom was Babel. And the Bible informs us what a despot he was; everywhere instigating war and bloodshed, laying the nations under tribute, and transmitting his despotic and warlike power from generation to generation, till the Egyptians drove his descendants into Canaan and Joshua drove them into Greece. Ninus inherited the tyranny of his father; and the whole history of the Assyrian empire from the days of Ninus to its overthrow by the Babylonians and the Medes, is a history of the most absolute despotism. Such also was the character of the Babylonian empire from the revolt of Nebopolassar to its destruction by Cyrus. Egypt and Persia also were equally strangers to civil liberty. And with some partial restrictions, by which the authority of the former was controlled by established customs, and that of the latter by the senate, such was the character of imperial Greece and Rome. The republics of Greece and Rome were compara-

tively free ; though their freedom was far from being founded upon a correct understanding of the rights of man. I do not know that there is in antiquity a single example of a free state in which the people have exerted any due influence upon the government until you come to the Jewish republic. When I cast my eyes over the earth at the present day, I cannot fix them on a single Pagan, Mahometan, or Antichristian country, where the genius of liberty has a dwelling place ; she may at times have hovered over them, like the dove over the waste of waters, but like her has found no rest for the sole of her foot.

The Bible is the great protector and guardian of the liberties of men. It is the true basis, and the only basis of the temple of freedom. It is the necessary result of an acquaintance with the word of God that a people should be restive under a tyrant's yoke, and sooner or later break from their chains. It is a maxim in the Romish Church, that "ignorance is the mother of devotion ;" but the true origin of this aphorism is, that ignorance rivets the chains of civil as well as ecclesiastical power. It were impossible for a people to be ignorant of their own rights, or the responsibilities of their rulers who are deeply and honestly imbued with the principles of the Bible. Where the Bible forms public opinion a nation must be free. Who does not see that such a tyrant as Nero, or Caligula ; or such a wretch as Henry VIII of England, or Charles IX of France, or Julius II or Alexander IV, would not be tolerated in Protestant Christendom for an hour ? The reason is, men read and understand the Bible. Moral and religious knowledge is everywhere circulated, and men can no more submit to chains in a Christian land than they can be suffocated, while they live and breathe a vital atmosphere.

Considering the age of the world in which the Jewish code was established, and how little the doctrine of personal rights was understood in the world generally, is it not somewhat remarkable that the laws of Moses were so decidedly the friend of civil liberty? I have taken some pains to examine some of the most instructive writers, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the *beau ideal* of a free government were not realized in the Hebrew State. And I confess I have been not a little de-

lighted and surprised. I know not where to look for any single work which is so full of the great principles of political wisdom as the laws of Moses and the history of the kings of Judah and Israel. There is not to my knowledge any where to be found such abundant and effective illustrations of these great principles as are found in the laws and history of this people. Notwithstanding their recent servitude to a foreign and despotic prince, and though just entering upon a tedious pilgrimage in the deserts of Arabia, they adopted a regular form of government. It was a government which lasted almost half a century before they came to their promised land; and which, when they were ultimately settled in that land, remained for a series of years undisturbed, and enabled them to maintain their independence throughout all the varieties of their national history. And yet, with the exception of the writ of *habeas corpus*, a privilege not required under their government, because it did not allow of imprisonment, I do not know that there is a single feature of a free State but is here distinctly developed. They were a people remarkably well acquainted with their rights and form of government. One reason, no doubt, why God left them wandering forty years in the desert of Arabia, was that the various parts of their political machinery might be arranged and adjusted, and well understood among themselves, before they took possession of the Promised Land. And it was thus arranged and understood, and proved itself not less adapted to their prosperity than their adversity; to their final settlement in Palestine, than their pilgrimage in the wilderness. Though rich in resources, and powerful in arms, they were free. Though holding, as they did in the time of David and Solomon, the balance of power between the two great monarchies of Egypt and Assyria, and giving law to all the petty kingdoms between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean, they remained a free people. They were free in choosing their own form of government; free in the enaction of their laws; free in that "the laws governed, and not men." The superior excellence of the Mosaic institutions, when compared with the institutions of the most celebrated pagan nations, is strikingly displayed in their attachment to the cause of freedom. They

were founded on a sound knowledge of human nature, and such as the art and science of government rest upon every where. There was every security for the preservation of social order which could be imparted on the one hand by a veneration for power, and on the other by a high sense of personal independence and individual rights.

The form of government established by Moses was republican; though, with salutary restrictions, the people were at liberty to change it when they desired. It consisted of twelve great tribes; each under its own leader constituting a little commonwealth, while all were united in one great republic. They were a nation of confederated states, bound together for the purposes of defence and conquest. Their government was more nearly assimilated to that of the Cantons of Switzerland, and the Confederated States of our own Union, than any other government. It bore some resemblance to that of the ancient Gauls, or Celtæ; and still more to that of the ancient Britons, except that the Gauls and Britons had no federative bond. During the commonwealth, they chose and accepted God as their King, and he chose and declared them his peculiar people. When their form of government was changed, it was at their own request and solicitation. From a republic, it became an elective, limited monarchy; under which their kings, whether appointed by God, or hereditary, did not enter upon the functions of their office until they were accepted and crowned by the people, and by a sworn capitulation were restricted in their prerogative. Their laws, though originating for the most part with God, were approved by themselves. The nation, in other words, adopted their own laws. Nor is there an instance on record, to the best of my knowledge, in which their laws were not proposed to the representatives of the people, and received their unanimous consent. On the one hand, there were some strong democratic tendencies in their government, and in the other some strong tendencies to despotism; but both under so many checks and balances, that never was nation better acquainted with their public interests, and rarely have the rights and duties of rulers and subjects been more definitely prescribed, or life, liberty, and property, more secure.

The liberties of a people depend much on the proper distribution of landed property. The Hebrew government was founded on an equal agrarian law. Unlike the agrarian law of Lycurgus, which debased the Spartans to a state of semi-barbarism, and ultimately committed the culture of their lands to their slaves; and equally unlike the feudal system of the middle ages, which has given shape and colouring to all the political and civil institutions of modern Europe; it made provision for the support of 600,000 yeomanry, with from six to twenty-five acres of land each, which they held independent of all temporal superiors, and which they might not alienate, but on the condition of their reverting to the families which originally possessed them, every fiftieth year.[1] Such were the immunities of the mass of the Hebrew population; not of its lords, nor its vassals, but its medium population. There were the poor beneath them, and men of superior rank and property above them,—the princes of their tribes and the heads of their thousands. But there was no degraded peasantry and no hereditary noblesse. And notwithstanding all that has been said of the pre-eminence of one poor, dependent tribe—a tribe that were disqualified from becoming the proprietors of a single foot of landed property—never was there less of a proud aristocracy in any form to trample on the rights of the poor, or, until a late period of their kingdom, of a merciless oppression of the lower orders of the people. No nobler people, no better organized community ever existed, than the ancient Hebrews. Inured to honourable industry—wealthy, but without ostentatious magnificence—ready at a moment's call to resist every attack upon their country's freedom—with an honest pride exulting in their revered ancestry—they may well be regarded, during the more auspicious periods of their history, as the noblest specimen of a free and independent nation. The proud descendant of Abraham was not always what he is now. "Many that are first shall be last, and many that are last shall be first." We may conceive of the sadness and despondency with which some lineal son of the ancient family of God, seated by the rivers of some modern Babylon, would

[1] Graves' Lectures on the Pentateuch.

exclaim, "how shall I sing the Lord's song in a strange land!" And we may easily conceive of the high enthusiasm that would enkindle in his bosom as he turns his thoughts in prospect toward the hills of his own loved Palestine, and anticipates the time when his people shall be no longer a hissing and a by-word among the nations. How would his eye kindle, as by the light of prophecy he beholds the Lion of the tribe of Judah displace the crescent that even now waves over the ruined Temple, and the mosque of Omar fall before the man who in the visions of God had a "line of flax and a measuring reed in his hand," to rebuild the walls that are once more to contain the emblems of the divine presence and glory! How would his heart beat with hope as such visions passed before him, and taking his harp from the willows, with what emotions would he again sing, "The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation; he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my fathers' God, and I will exalt him."

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The love of liberty thus expressed in the Old Testament is still more clearly indicated by the Christian dispensation. One of the most unfounded objections to Christianity that ever originated with designing, or was believed by foolish men, is that it is adapted to subject the many to the few. So far from this, it is the only religion which honestly and effectually consults the interests of men for time as well as eternity. It is the only instrument by which the poor can defend their rights and resist the encroachments of the proud and oppressive. The whole spirit and genius of Christianity are everywhere friendly to freedom. It teaches us that men of every tribe, language, clime, and colour are the creatures of God. It announces that the great Creator "hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth." It pronounces the incidental, and circumstantial, and temporary distinctions between men as of minor consequence, and of no account whatever, when compared with the great points of similitude which result from their common origin, their common depravity, their common suffering, common dependence, and common responsibilities.

It is remarked of the divine Founder of the Christian faith that the "common people heard him gladly." He was himself one of the common people. He was raised from an obscure family in Israel, and was from the humbler walks of life. All his sympathies were with the common people. He knew the heart of the suffering and oppressed, and was touched with the feeling of their infirmities. Of the same character were his Apostles, and the principal teachers of his religion. And of the same character do we find all their doctrines and precepts. "To the poor the gospel is preached. In Christ Jesus, there is neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free." "The cultivated heathen," says Tholuck, "were offended at Christianity precisely for this reason, that the higher classes could no longer have precedence of the common people."[1] We have very justly regarded the kingdom of Spain as furnishing no very enviable exhibition of civil liberty. But notwithstanding all the corruptions of Christianity in that papal kingdom evidence is not wanting, that it exerted some influence at least in restraining arbitrary power. In the last hours of the distinguished queen Isabella, a recent and accomplished historian of our own country informs us, that "she expressed her doubts as to the legality of the revenue of the *alcavalas*, constituting the principal income of the crown. She directed a commission to ascertain whether it were originally intended to be perpetual, and if this were done with the free consent of the people: enjoining her heirs in that event, to collect the tax so that it should press least heavily on her subjects. Should it be found otherwise, however, she directs that the legislature be summoned to devise measures for supplying the wants of the crown—measures depending for their validity on the good pleasure of the subjects of the realm."[2]

Never, with the Bible in our hands, can we deny rights to another, which under the same circumstances we would claim for ourselves. "Christianity," says Montesquieu, "is a stranger to despotic power." "The religion," says De Tocqueville, "which declares that all are equal in the sight of God, will not

[1] Biblical Repository. Vol. II.
[2] Prescot's Hist. of the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella.

refuse to acknowledge that all citizens are equal in the eye of the law." Elsewhere, this elegant and instructive writer makes this remark, "Religion is the companion of liberty in all its battles and all its conflicts; the cradle of its infancy and the divine source of its claims." Nor is it any unusual thing for the friends of liberty in France, to speak in terms of enthusiastic commendation of the republicanism of the Scriptures. Even the Abbe de la Mennais, whom a late writer distinguishes as one of the most powerful minds in Europe, little as he regards Christianity as a revelation from God, familiarly speaks of its Author as the Great Republican of his age. Our distinguished countryman, the late Dewitt Clinton, in a highly polished address before the New York Alpha of the Phi Beta Kappa, writes the following thoughts which are so truly worthy of his character as a statesman, and his creed as a believer in divine revelation. "Christianity is in its essence, its doctrines, and its forms, republican. It teaches our descent from a common pair; it inculcates the natural equality of mankind; and it points to our origin and our end, to our nativity and our graves, and to our immortal destinies, as illustrations of this impressive truth." And what is more to our purpose, considering the prepossessions which the writer has so often avowed against the religion of the New Testament, the author of Travels in England, France, Spain and the Barbary States, pays the following unreluctant homage to the beneficial influence which Christianity exerts upon civil liberty. After landing in France from the last named country, he remarks, "I could breathe freely, speak freely, I no longer viewed my fellow men with distrust, and I thanked God that I was in a Christian land."[1]

And what is the language of facts? Whence, with the exception of slavery in the United States, an evil brought into the country originally under the authority of the British government, and continued in defiance of all the remonstrances of our ancestors, whence is that equality of condition which is so indicative of liberty, so much more complete in Christian

[1] Travels in England, France, Spain and the Barbary States, by Mordecai M. Noah.

countries, than in any other part of the world? Who but a Christian poet has ever sung,

> "'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
> Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume;
> And we are weeds without it?"

Every where the men whose minds have been imbued with the light and spirit of the holy Scriptures have been the devoted friends of civil liberty. Such were the Lollards in England, the adherents of Luther in Germany, and of John Knox in Scotland. Such was Holland, when her sturdy republican virtues, the learning and piety of her clergy, and the excellence of her moral and literary institutions spread her fame throughout the earth. Such was Switzerland, not only during those periods when she was most free, but those in which she struggled, however unsuccessfully, for her freedom. Such were the protestant nonconformists from the days of the Reformation to the death of queen Elizabeth. Such were the Presbyterians in the days of the first Charles. Such were others, who, though in some respects misguided men, laid their hands upon the Bible, and boldly proclaimed, that "resistance to tyrants is obedience to God." Such were those noble men, the Huguenots of New York and New Jersey, as well as others of their suffering companions, who fled from France, and sealed their testimony with their blood, on the fatal revocation of the edict of Nantz. Such also were the Puritans of New England, who through the favour of Divine Providence, opposed, though not a bolder, a more successful resistance to despotic power. With the courage of heroes and the zeal of martyrs, they struggled for and obtained the charter of liberty now enjoyed by the British nation. Even the historian Hume, whose prepossessions all lay on the side of absolute monarchy, and who was sufficiently prejudiced against the Bible, was constrained to the confession, "that the precious spark of liberty had been kindled and was preserved by the Puritans alone, and that it was to this sect the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution." It has been common with a certain class of writers to speak evil of these excellent men. Those who would not do this ignorantly should acquaint themselves with their character

as it is exhibited in Brodie's British Empire; from the accession of Charles Ist to the Restoration; in Vaughn's Stuart Dynasty; in Godwin's History of the Commonwealth, and in Bishop Burnet's History of his own times. The general character of the dissenters of the independent denominations in England also verifies the scope and spirit of these remarks. On the celebrated motion in the House of Lords, for enquiry into the cause of the death of the devoted missionary, Smith, in one of the West India Islands, Lord Brougham spoke of the Independents as a "body of men to be held in lasting veneration for the unshaken fortitude with which, in all times they have maintained their attachment to civil liberty: men to whose ancestors England will ever acknowledge a boundless debt of gratitude as long as freedom is prized among us. For they, I fearlessly confess it, they, with whatever ridicule some may visit their excesses, or with whatever blame others, they, with the zeal of martyrs, the purity of early Christians, the skill and courage of the most renowned warriors, obtained for England the free constitution she now enjoys."

It is worthy of remark, that the Bible recognizes and maintains the only principle on which it is possible for a nation ever to enjoy the blessings of civil liberty. That principle is, that all that is valuable in the institutions of civil liberty rests on the character which the people sustain as citizens. The fear of God is the foundation of political freedom.

> "He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
> And all are slaves beside."

Bad men cannot make good citizens. It is impossible that a nation of infidels or idolaters should be a nation of freemen. It is when a people forget God that tyrants forge their chains. The principles of liberty and the principles of the Bible are most exactly coincident. A vitiated state of morals, a corrupted public conscience is incompatible with freedom. Nothing short of the strong influence of that system of truth which God has revealed from heaven is competent so to guide, moderate, and preserve the balance between the conflicting interests and passions of men as to prepare them for the blessings of free

government. Holland was free so long as she was virtuous. She was a flourishing republic, she produced great and enlightened statesmen, until she became corrupt, and infidelity spoiled her of her glory. France would have become free on the accession of her present citizen king but for the radical deficiency in her moral virtue. When the distinguished Perrier, who succeeded La Fayette in the office of prime minister to Louis Phillipe, was on his bed of death, he exclaimed with great emphasis and fervour, *La France doit avoir une religion!* "France *must* have religion." Liberty cannot exist without morality, nor morality without the religion of the Bible. It is a nation's love of law, its love of wise and benevolent institutions, its attachment to the public weal, its peaceful and benevolent spirit, its love of virtue, and these alone that can make it free. Take these away and there must be tyrants in their place. I hold no axiom more true or more important than this, that man must be governed by moral truth, or despotic power. As soon as a nation becomes corrupt, her liberties degenerate into faction; and then nothing short of the strong arm of despotism will restrain the passions of men, and control their pride, their selfishness, their love of gold, their thirst for domination, and their brutal licentiousness. The Bible alone is the source of that high-toned moral principle which is necessary to all classes, in all their intercourse, for the exercise of all their rights, and the enjoyment of all their privileges. Without it, rulers become tyrants, and the people are fitted only for servitude, or anarchy. Without it, there is no such thing as an intelligent, lofty, ardent, honourable, and disinterested character. Nothing else is capable of combining a nation into one great brotherhood—annihilating its divisions—quenching its hate—destroying its spirit of party—bringing all parts with all their jarring interests into one great whole, and inscribing on the banner, for ever sacred to freedom and virtue, *E pluribus unum.* Nothing else will rightly control its suffrages; send up a salutary influence into its senate chamber; diffuse its power through all ranks of office; direct learning and laws; act on commerce and the arts, and spread that hallowed influence through every department of society that shall render

its liberties perpetual. Statesmen may be slow to learn from the Bible but they will find no surer guide to political skill and foresight. The common people may be slow to learn from the Bible; but they will no where find their interests so watchfully protected, and their liberties defended with such ability and so many counsels of wisdom. The designs of ambitious and intriguing men, the artifices of demagogues, the usurpations of power, the corrupting influence of high places, and the punishment of political delusion, all find their prototype and antidote in the principles, prophecies, biography, and history of the Bible. Where may a people learn a more affecting lesson than in the succession of weak and wicked princes, from the death of Josiah to the destruction of the city and temple, and the capture of Zedekiah, by Nebuchadnezzar? Read the history of the subtle and traitorous Absalom. Bold, valiant, and revengeful; haughty, eloquent, and popular, he "stole the hearts of the people;" expelled his venerable father from Jerusalem; and having conciliated the affections of a misguided and deceived populace, became after a short period as much the object of their contempt as he was before the object of their veneration. Were such a monument as Absalom's pillar of stones erected over the body of every demagogue at the present day, it might be a wholesome comment upon the influence the Bible exerts upon the principles of civil liberty. Read too the history of Jeroboam the son of Nebat; a base idolater, the descendant of a slave, a turbulent, ambitious prince, a fugitive from public justice, corrupt and intriguing, raised to supreme power by an unprincipled majority, corrupting and destroying the people, drying up the sources of national wealth, entailing poverty and abjectness upon the ten tribes to the latest generation, and drawing down upon them the wrath of heaven for twenty successive reigns, and more than two centuries after his death! Contrast also the reign of Solomon with the reign of Jeroboam; the reign of Asa with the reign of Ahab; the reign of Jehoash with the reign of Jehoahaz; and you will form a just estimate of good rulers, and see what a fearful scourge wicked rulers are to their subjects. The God of the Bible is the King of nations. The Lord is with them while

they are with him. Creation and providence are under his control. With all their influences, all their power, all their glory, they are under him as the Prince of its princes, the Lord of its lords, and all subservient to his designs. A heathen prince was once constrained to say, that "his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation." His service is freedom; alienation from his empire is the veriest bondage.

The land we live in is a Christian land. The Bible is here recognized as true; and in our own State has been solemnly decided as constituting a part of the common law. We shall be a free people only as we remain a Christian people. If a low and degraded infidelity should ever succeed in its already begun enterprise of sending up from the whole face of this land her poisonous exhalations, and the youth of our country become regardless of the God of their fathers; men in other lands who have been watching for our downfall, will in a few short years enrol us on the catalogue of enslaved nations. You will have a part to act on this great theatre, my young friends, when older heads shall sleep beneath the clods of the valley. Act it like Christian men. Love your country, and for your country's sake. Hold those in detestation who disturb her peace, and tamper with the minds of the young for the purposes of office and gain. It will be in vain that infidel politicians plot the ruin of this fair land if her young men remain firm to the interests of moral virtue and the Bible. Would that my voice could reach the ear of every young man in the land, and announce to him, how much his country expects from every intelligent friend of the Bible. There is no want of effort to corrupt and demoralize the young men of this nation; and when once this is done, they in their turn will become the corrupters and demoralizers of others, until the nation becomes ripened for ruin. The Bible is your protection. There is a natural propensity in the human mind to lawless indulgence, and to hostility to all those systems of human government that are based on the word of God. Beware of being carried down this fatal current. There is nothing that may be so safely trusted, in the formation of your political sentiments and influ-

ence, as the Bible. I have never known a great political struggle in a Christian land which was not a great moral struggle, and would not have been decided in an hour by the appropriate influence of the Bible. Here is the danger of this Republic. So long as the Bible remains our glory and happiness, our liberties will remain; but beyond this, there is nothing to forbid the fear that we shall gradually become an enslaved nation.

But I must close, with a single thought more. "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Seriously considered, other liberty is an imaginary theory—an illusion—a name—a sound. You may chant its praises and celebrate its conquests, and yet be slaves. You may deify it, and erect to it monuments, and build its altars, and pour upon them costly libations, and yet be the slaves of sin. But there is a liberty that is worth the name. It is that intellectual and moral condition of the soul which constitutes her highest excellence and glory. It is that spiritual liberty—that Christian freedom—that liberty of mind, and conscience, and heart, which through divine grace the soul enjoys, when she breaks the bonds of her iniquity and possesses the liberty of the children of God. It is to be no longer the servant of sin; no longer the slave of passion; no longer in bondage to vanity, pride, self, and the world; but to be the loyal and happy subject of the divine government, the renovated citizen of the commonwealth of Israel, and the servant of that Divine Master whose every requisition is a benefit, whose every command is a promise, and to whose service every sacrifice becomes a favour, every act of self-denial a blessing. Such a man is free—free every where; free in solitude—free in the midst of the world—free in his abundance—free in his poverty—free in life—free in death—always free—"free forever, because he is forever with God."

LECTURE V.

THE SCRIPTURES THE FOUNDATION OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND THE RIGHTS OF CONSCIENCE.

HAVING at our last opportunity expressed a few thoughts in relation to the influence of the Bible upon civil liberty and human governments, I propose to devote the present lecture to a consideration of the influence it exerts upon religious liberty and the rights of conscience. The subject is one of no common magnitude. Who, had he no other alternative, would not cheerfully consent to become the vassal of the most despotic government on the earth, where the rights of conscience were respected, than the citizen of the freest republic, where these rights are denied? Of all human rights, the rights of conscience are the most sacred and inviolate. Civil liberty relates to things seen and temporal, religious liberty to things unseen and eternal; civil liberty relates to the body, religious liberty to the soul; and which may be the more readily dispensed with, no honest and virtuous mind can be long in deciding.

By religious liberty, I mean the right of every man to adopt and enjoy whatever opinions he chooses on religious subjects, and to worship the Supreme Being according to the dictates of his own conscience, without any obstruction from the law of the land. Religious toleration is the allowance of religious opinions and modes of worship, when different from those established by law. Religious liberty disclaims all right of law to control men in their opinions and worship. Religious toleration implies the existence and the modified exercise of power in such control; religious liberty implies that no such power exists, and none such is assumed. The most perfect religious liberty exists in that community, where there is no such thing

as toleration, because there is no need of it. None desires or can conceive of a greater degree of religious liberty than that which exists under a government where one man and one religious denomination has as good a right as another to the free and unobstructed enjoyment of its creed and worship.

If we mistake not, this greatest and most inalienable of all human rights is one of the last that has been respected by civil governments, and has found a refuge only in the well-defined principles and mild auspices of the Christian dispensation. On how many a page of pagan history do you find the melancholy fact recorded of men who were condemned to the hemlock and the flames, because they would not worship at the shrine of idol gods? The decree of the proud Nebuchadnezzar, that "whosoever falleth not down and worshippeth the golden image that he had set up, should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace," was an ancient and a very common mode of punishment among the oriental nations, inflicted on those who would not worship their idols. Mountains of flame have ascended to heaven, and rivers of blood have been poured upon the earth, as offerings on the altar of a malignant or misguided intolerance. From the time that Antiochus laid waste the Holy Land, and depopulated the city of Jerusalem to the destruction of the infants of Bethlehem by Herod; from the resurrection of the Saviour to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus; from the destruction of Jerusalem to the accession of Constantine to the throne of the Roman empire; the prediction has been most fearfully fulfilled, "There was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought, and the dragon fought, and his angels."

The limits of a single lecture do not allow me to speak at length of the spirit of intolerance, which has in various ages of the world been the fruitful source of so much misery and crime. Not volumes merely, but libraries have been written without exhausting the mournful theme. Jews, Mahometans, Christians, and pagans have all, though not always with the same ardour and phrensy, been, to a greater or less degree, involved in this miserable warfare.

Intolerance toward the Christian faith was early expressed

by the Jews, at the very birth of Christianity. As a nation, they were distinguished for their spiritual pride and bigotry, and regarded other nations with a haughty superciliousness, which easily matured to malignity and persecution. Though at the time when our blessed Lord appeared in the flesh, Judasim was in the last stages of decay; though it had the form of godliness, and was destitute of its power, and had indeed become a sort of practical infidelity; it summoned and collected all its remaining vigour to oppose the gospel of the Son of God. Though it was split up into a great variety of sects and parties; yet fearful of the influence of Christianity, jealous of its power, trembling for their own prerogative, the Jewish priests and rulers lost no opportunity of indulging themselves, not only in the extremes of contumely and abuse against the Christians, but did not hesitate to persecute them to the death. The Pharisees were formalists; the Sadducees were infidels; the Essenes were enthusiasts and mystics—deeply imbued with the philosophy of the Platonic school, and regarding even their own law as a mere allegorical system of mysterious truths. But like Herod and Pontius Pilate, all these jarring sects forgot their mutual and minor alienations in their absorbing enmity to the gospel of Christ. Many of them indeed, like the early disciples, and Saul of Tarsus, and others on the day of Pentecost, saw the insufficiency of their own religion, felt the need of a surer guide, and became the followers of Christ; but the mass of the nation were violent and uncompromising in their hostility to the Christian faith. They pursued the infant Saviour from his cradle to Egypt, from Egypt to Nazareth, and from Nazareth to the cross. After having satiated their malignity upon him, they directed it in all its infuriate madness against his disciples. Stephen, James the son of Zebedee, and James the just, who presided over the church at Jerusalem, were among the early victims of their rage. Sometimes their violence was expressed in threatening; sometimes in rash and headlong counsels; sometimes in the imprisonment of the Christians; and sometimes in stripes and death. Nor were their persecutions limited to Palestine. Wherever they were scattered throughout the Roman provinces, they became the

instigators of those feuds among the populace, and that violence of the magistracy which destroyed so many of the harmless followers of Christ.[1] The early Christians had no more bitter enemies than the Jews. From the highest seat of power in Jerusalem, down to the lowest publican who sat at the receipt of custom, the embodied efforts of the nation, both in the Holy land and out of it, were enlisted against Christianity. There was this semblance of apology for the Jews. The God of Abraham had called them out from among the nations with the view of dissociating them from all the varieties and forms of pagan idolatry, and until the coming of the Messiah, of preserving among them the only remnant of the true religion on the earth. They were early taught by God himself to regard all other nations with suspicion; to have no intercourse with them; and to prohibit their residence among them until they had first renounced their paganism, and become proselytes to the faith and worship of the true God. It is a lame apology; but like one of their own misguided countrymen, they often "did it ignorantly and in unbelief." They were strongly attached to their own national religious peculiarities; and yet nothing could be more contrary to the genius of their own religion than the pride, envy, and malignity, with which they arrayed those peculiarities against Christianity. Nothing could be more contrary to the light of their own symbols, prophecies, and law. Nothing could be more contrary to the overwhelming testimony that Jesus was the Son of God. And yet they have ever been an intolerant people, and have extended their intolerance not less to their own countrymen, who renounced the Jewish religion, than to strangers. Wherever they have been in power, they have always been an intolerant people. When Mordecai was prime minister at the Persian court under the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, "many of the people of the land became Jews, because the fear of the Jews came upon them." The Jews had authority and they exercised it so effectually that the Persians professed Judaism through fear. We know too what an iron sceptre their rulers swayed, and under what a reign of terror the nation groaned in subsequent ages. There was no such thing

[1] See Mosheim's Institutes of Ecclesiastical History.

as religious liberty. If any man confessed Christ, he "was put out of the synagogue; he was pronounced an outlaw; his property was confiscated; he was denied all the charities of life; his person was put beyond the protection of the government; and the man that killed him was thought to have done God service.

If from the Jews we turn to the Mahometans, we have the same melancholy picture. Like a furious torrent, the religion of the false prophet laid waste Asia, Africa, and a great part of Europe. It was introduced at a period of the world when the corruptions of Christianity and the divisions throughout Christendom invited the enterprise of some bold and ardent mind, and when the customs and passions of men, and the circumstances of the times were easily made subservient to such a design. The spirit of intolerance, also, which existed among the Christians proved a favourable event for the advancement of Mahometanism. Justinian had previously commenced his persecutions; he had destroyed the Samaritans in Palestine; and their posterity probably embraced the new religion out of hatred to the Christians, and in consequence of the severe edicts published against them by the Roman emperors. The Roman and Persian monarchies were also on the decline; and Mahomet had discernment enough to turn all these favourable opportunities to his own advantage. It is scarcely necessary to say, that Mahomet boldly professed to convert the nations by the sword. It was one of the main pillars of his system, that paradise was the reward of extirpating those who would not become his followers. It was his maxim, that "the sword is the key of heaven and of hell." The Jews were more the objects of his hatred than any other sect. He utterly destroyed them in Arabia, confiscated their property, and subjected them to tortures. He would not condescend to allow them to become his followers, and gave testimony of the hatred he bore them in his last hours. "May God curse the Jews," said he, "for they have made temples of the sepulchres of their prophets!" With this exception, the alternative he offered to his enemies was, to acknowledge the true God and his prophet, tribute or death. And with this alternative he subdued a great part of the world. His first conquests were in Arabia, Persia, and

Syria. Subsequently his successors subdued Egypt and Africa, from the Nile to the Atlantic ocean. After the Saracens became Mahometans, they overran and desolated the Roman empire, and made the most fearful devastation of the oriental churches. Not satisfied with these conquests, they penetrated into Spain and France; subsequently attached the Turks to their standard, became masters of the fairest portions of Europe, and planted the crescent on the walls of Constantinople. The mildest feature in the religion of Mahomet was, that he did not deny that the followers of any religion might be saved if their actions were virtuous. And yet, strange to say, wherever he came in contact with men, he recognized no rights of conscience, no degree of religious liberty. Wherever his followers went, it was Islamism, tribute or death.[1]

The pagan world, too, has fiercely set itself against the Lord and against his Anointed. With few exceptions, the pagan nations cannot be said to have expressed any great degree of intolerance towards one another. They have been bitter persecutors of the religion of the Old and New Testaments, but not often persecutors of paganism itself. Though plunged in the grossest superstition, and though almost every nation had its own peculiar deities; this variety of gods and religions was rarely the source even of division or animosity. Dr. Mosheim observes that the Egyptians are an exception to this remark; while at the same time he confesses that "the Egyptian wars, waged to avenge their gods, cannot properly be called religious wars, not being undertaken either to propagate or to suppress any one form of religion." The Roman empire, in the days of her pagan princes, became drunk with the blood of Christendom. Before the close of the first century, the power of the Gospel was felt throughout that vast empire. But its success only roused the dormant hostility of its foes. After the demolition of the Jewish state by Vespasian, a series of persecutions against Christianity was commenced, beginning under Nero, in the thirty-first year of the Christian era, and extending to the reign of Dioclesian, including about three centuries of as bitter suffering and cruelty as men were ever called

[1] See Sale's Koran—Picart's Ceremonies, and Herbelot's Bibli. Orient.

to endure. The Christian religion was deemed a "detestable superstition," and the Christian name contemptible to a proverb. Under the reign of Nero, no class of men were considered more the enemies of mankind than the Christians; and notwithstanding the purity and benevolence of their character, they incurred the hatred of the pagan world, were obnoxious to its fury, torn by wild beasts, consumed by fire, and in such multitudes that the streets of Rome, night after night, were illuminated by the fearful conflagrations. In the latter part of the reign of Domitian, who succeeded to the empire in the year eighty-one, all the horrors of Nero's persecution were renewed. Under Trajan, the persevering profession of Christianity was by law a capital offence. It was by his order that Ignatius the bishop of Antioch was carried a prisoner from that city to Rome, and thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre. After Trajan, Marcus Antoninus, though a prince so universally popular that the gratitude of Rome at his death enrolled him among the gods, became the implacable enemy of Christianity, subjected its disciples to torture, and put to death whole churches. It was under his reign that Justin Martyr, Polycarp, the martyrs of Lyons and Vienne, became victims of the ghastly tortures and bloody animosity of the pagans. After him, torrents of blood were shed by Severus, in Africa and Egypt; and many a Christian female, like those noble women Felicitas and Perpetua, was stripped, scourged, and thrown to the wild beasts, exclaiming, as the latter did to her weeping friends, "Continue firm in the faith, love one another, and be not offended at our sufferings!" After him, the spirit of persecution broke out in all its horrors under Decius, whose cruel and terrible edicts were executed with a variety and intenseness of newly invented suffering. The successor of Decius was Gallus, whose short reign was distinguished by such severity of persecutions and such a collection of human miseries, that Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, himself a martyr to the Christian faith, thought that the reign of Antichrist was come, and the final judgment near at hand. During the early part of the reign of Valerian, the church found in him a friend and protector; but after a short truce of three

years, as one of the most memorable instances of the instability of the human character, he commenced a deadly persecution. After Valerian, a general persecution, instigated by the pagan priests, broke out under the reign of Dioclesian, who demolished the temples of the Christians, burned their sacred books, deprived them of all civil rights and honours, and consigned them to torture and flames. This persecution raged against all sorts of men who bore the Christian name; and with the exception of France, pervaded the whole Roman world. As evidence of the severity of this persecution, a coin was struck under the reign of this detestable persecutor, with this inscription, "Nomine Christianorum deleto"—the Christian name extinguished.[1] Thus was this vast pagan empire, this colossal power, extending itself from the straits of Gibraltar to the Caspian sea, covering all Europe, and having its territories even in Africa and the south of Britain, combined almost as with the counsels and heart of one man against the gospel of Christ. All ranks and conditions of men seemed bent on its destruction—emperors trembling for their crowns, priests for their gold, philosophers for their systems, and the common people, the more terrible for their ignorance and superstitions. It was indeed a dark day to the church. One universal cry of persecution and death might have been heard from Jerusalem to Ephesus, from Ephesus to Rome, from Rome to the provinces of Gaul.

It were devoutly to be wished that we could say with truth, that the Christian church were herself pure from the spirit of intolerance and the blood of persecution. It is a most melancholy retrospect to look back upon the slow progress of religious liberty, even in the visible church of God. The world has no where seen greater evidences of the imperfection of men, of the blindness of the human heart, of the dangers of an excited state of mind in religious controversies, and of the influence of the spirit of the age and times in which men live, than in the tardy growth of religious liberty even under the light of Christian truth. It is indeed a melancholy retrospect to look back upon the very slow progress of religious toleration in our world.

[1] See Mosheim, Milner, and Lardner.

The principles of religious liberty seem to have been understood by few of any religious denomination, until a very late period. The human mind seems to have been enveloped in an unaccountable hallucination on this plain subject; and ages and men, otherwise distinguished for discretion, for piety, and even for moral grandeur have been scarcely less distinguished for an intolerance and bigotry utterly at war with the spirit of Christianity, and a lasting reproach to the Christian name. Not a little watchfulness is necessary, even on the part of the best of men, before they will cultivate a kind spirit toward those who dissent from them on subjects so important as the various topics of their religious faith. No man, and no set of men, know what they will do till they have power. The pride of power, and power too over the conscience — a pride which, while it seems to be associated with the love of the truth, is at heart associated with that subtle self-complacency which says, "Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou;" a pride which, while it conceals its true motives under the pretence of contending earnestly for the faith, cannot suppress the ostentatious claim of Jehu, "Come see my zeal for the Lord,"—this is the height, the giddy height from which intolerance and persecution have in every age pronounced the doom of the humble followers of the crucified Saviour. Different departments of the visible church have differed widely in their views and conduct in relation to this subject. The Romish church ever has been the great enemy of religious liberty. Witness her assumption of the civil power, when princes bowed at her feet, and received their crowns at her hands; when nations trembled before her, and were anathematized at her pleasure. Witness her slaying of the witnesses for the truth throughout Germany, France, and Britain. Witness her persecutions in the valleys of Piedmont and the rocky Alps. Witness the decisions of her councils, the development of her secret plots and conspiracies, her open invasions and blood. Witness the history of that dark and sanguinary tribunal, the Inquisition. Think of the blood which deluged Bohemia for thirty years. Think of the massacre in the reign of Charles IX of France, when that heartless prince boasted of having slaughtered three hundred

thousand protestants. Advert too to the intolerance of Louis XIV and of Queen Mary of England, when the prediction was so memorably verified, that "It was given to the beast to make war with the saints and to overcome them." Nor has she reformed in principle from that hour to the present; but is still the same unchanging enemy to religious liberty and the rights of conscience as the actual influence of her doctrines, her precepts, and her practices every where evinces. It was foretold that antichrist should "wear down the saints of the Most High," and that the "scarlet-coloured beast should be drunken with the blood of the saints." And these predictions have been mournfully fulfilled in the oppression, cruelty, and intolerance which have ever distinguished the church of Rome. Intolerance is the natural and genuine effect of her whole system. "Toleration," says Bossuet, who was far from being a violent Romanist, "toleration is not a mark of the true church." [1] Uniformly has the "Son of perdition" maintained the right to persecute even unto death every deviation from his creed, and every secession from his family. By the solemn decisions of his councils still unrevoked, heresy and schism are "mortal sins."

But while we say that the Romish church has been, and still is, the great enemy, with ingenuous shame must we confess that the Protestant church has not always been the friend of religious freedom. It was no doubt more the fault of the age than of the man, that Calvin instigated the condemnation of Servetus. But what a comment upon the spirit of the age! The law which condemned heretics to the flames, was retained by the Protestant churches of England during one hundred and thirty years. And long after Protestantism was finally established at the revolution in Scotland, it framed the solemn League and Covenant for the extirpation of prelacy by the sword. There is no more humbling view than that which is presented by this single feature in the history of the Church. At one moment she is persecuted of her pagan neighbours; at the next the persecutor of some of her own family. Scarcely has she rest from her external foes and the wounds are stanched

[1] Bossuet's 'History of the Variations of Protestants.'

that were opened by the sword of the unbelieving than she herself turns it against her own children! And yet the bitterness of this spirit has been allayed by the Gospel. The vehemence of this fierce orthodoxy has been gradually subsiding, and its unfeeling icy rigour melting away, in proportion as the Sun of Righteousness has been gaining a gradual ascendancy over the mind; and as the Church has become wiser and better, she has become the more consistent friend and advocate of religious liberty.

The principles of religious liberty are clearly revealed in the New Testament. And what are those principles? They are in the first instance that the holy Scriptures are the only source of authority in matters of religion. It is not remote antiquity. It is the Bible. It is not tradition. It is the Bible. Tradition is an indefinite, intangible thing—found any where—found no where. It is not the decision of councils nor ecclesiastical statutes. It is the Bible. "The word is nigh thee, in thy heart and in thy mouth."

Another of these principles is, that the Bible secures to every man the undeniable and inviolable right of private judgment in all matters of religious faith and duty. This was the doctrine of the Great Reformation; this is the doctrine of the New Testament. That sacred book does not more clearly reveal the obligations to faith and obedience than it asserts the right of individual thought and opinion founded on the principle of individual, personal responsibility. This the church of Rome denies, and the Scriptures affirm. On this point, they have been and still are at issue. On this point also the church of God has, from age to age, been at issue with civil governments, instigated as they have been by ecclesiastical establishments, to interpose the power of the secular arm to secure uniformity in belief and modes of worship. But what is more evident from the New Testament than that men are, in this respect, responsible not to any secular tribunal, but to God alone; that the Bible is the only infallible standard, and the Author of the Bible the only Judge? The Scriptures commend those who, with a noble independence of thought and Berean character, brought even the instructions of inspired apostles to the uner-

ring authority of God's holy word. They invite men to read and hear for themselves; humbly and prayerfully to examine every religious subject, and employ all their powers in investigating the truth; and when they have done so, solemnly, and in the fear of God, to form their own opinions. They require them to form, not a wrong judgment, but a right one, and make them responsible to the Searcher of hearts for the judgment they form. God gives them light, and bids them beware how they pervert, or abuse it, or call it darkness. Prejudice, and partiality, and hostility to the truth he allows no man to exercise. None may form his judgment without evidence, nor in opposition to evidence, but according to evidence; and if he fails to do this, he must answer it to his Maker. "To his own Master he standeth, or falleth." For this high prerogative God has formed him, and given him a supernatural revelation, and laid the solemn injunction upon his conscience, "prove all things; hold fast that which is good." The Bible gives no man, or set of men, dominion over human faith. The apostles themselves expressly disclaimed this authority. The maxim of the prophets was, "to the law and the testimony." The direction of the Saviour stands out in living characters before the world, "call no man master, for one is your master, even Christ." There is no thought enstamped more legibly on the pages of Holy Writ than the individual, personal responsibility of every subject of the divine government. "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it." "Every one of us shall give an account of himself unto God." "Every man shall be judged according to his works;" works that are the sole expositor of his character, because they are the result of affections that indicate him to be the enemy, or the friend of righteousness, as they have grown out of his views of divine truth. There would be some semblance of reason in submitting our religious opinions to the dictation of men, if they could assume our responsibility and stand in our place when we stand in the judgment; if they could suffer in our stead when we and our principles are condemned at the last day. I know men may greatly abuse the liberty of forming their own religious opinions. They have done so to their souls'

undoing. I know too that one of the great stratagems of the deceiver is this boasted liberty, and that many swerve from the faith through the fear of not thinking for themselves. But much as this artifice of the destroyer is to be detested, better had the right of private judgment be abused than not enjoyed. There is no right, without its corresponding obligation. The man who abuses the right of private judgment has fearful responsibilities. Let him see to them. It is at his peril if "he receives not the love of the truth, that he may be saved."

Another of the great principles of religious liberty as disclosed in the New Testament is, that religion is a spiritual system, and must be promoted by a moral and spiritual influence. A man's opinions do not admit of coercion. You may coerce his professions, but not his judgment. You may compel him to acknowledge that he believes what he does not believe; you may make him a hypocrite; but you cannot make him a Christian. You cannot reach his understanding by pains and penalties, nor by any means of this sort give vigour to his conscience, or affect his heart. You may awaken resistance; you may rouse enmity; you may give hardihood to his obduracy and make him patient in suffering; but you cannot change his views or impart holiness of heart, or life. These are produced by the blessing of God upon his own truth. Men have a part to act in securing this result, but it is of no coercive kind. They may reason, expostulate, persuade, but it belongs not to men to compel. The field of argument and impartial investigation is the arena where the truth has ever won her most splendid victories. Christianity is no gainer, but has been uniformly the loser by calling in the aid of the secular arm. There never was a greater error than in supposing that the interests of truth and piety were thus advanced. We may be sincerely desirous to deliver men from their intellectual and moral aberrations; we may oppose every system of delusion and wickedness, and endeavour to break the bondage of the prince of darkness; but physical force is not the way to accomplish this benevolent end. If you would promote error, persecute it. If you would establish false religions on a more permanent basis than they have yet occupied; if you would

enlist the sympathies of men in favour of a cause, which otherwise would have no sympathy, persecute it—send its advocates to the stake and gibbet—persecute it to the death. "Persecution is disgraceful to those who inflict but honourable to those who suffer it. It throws around them the charm and glory of a relationship to the apostles and prophets and men of whom the world was not worthy." Error is not worthy of such an honour. I would not persecute error. I would not persecute at all; but, if there must be persecution, let truth have the honour of being the victim. There is a God in heaven, and a conscience in the bosoms of men; and it were infinitely better for the cause of righteousness to suffer wrong than to do wrong. "In meekness instructing those who oppose themselves, peradventure God will give them repentance to the ackowledgment of the truth,"—this is the way the Scriptures recommend of opposing error, destroying false religions, and turning the world to the service and worship of the true God.

There is still another very obvious principle of religious liberty disclosed in the New Testament; and that is, that civil government, as such, has no other concern with religion than to respect the rights of conscience, and extend to men of all religious names and denominations its impartial protection. This is all that the true religion solicits of the secular power. This is not religious toleration merely, but religious liberty. I am acquainted with no writer who has discussed this single point with so much ability as the celebrated John Locke. He contended with the monstrous error, to which we have already referred, and which was so rife during the reigns of the first and second Charles, and even through the intervening revolution in the days of Cromwell, that men ought to be coerced by pains and penalties inflicted by the civil power, to profess a definitely prescribed form of religious doctrines, and to conform themselves to one particular formulary of religious worship. His object was to draw the lines of demarcation between the Church and the State; to distinguish between the powers of civil government and the powers of religion; and to show that the one is exclusively concerned in promoting the spiritual and eternal interests of men, and that the other has the care of the Com-

monwealth. The province of the civil magistrate is to secure to all the members of the body politic the just enjoyment of life, liberty, reputation, and property. This is the whole of its jurisdiction. The care of souls is not committed to the civil magistrate any more than to other men. The power of the civil magistrate, consisting only in outward force, is of such a kind that it can never be applied for religious purposes, in any other way than by the impartial execution of equal laws for the protection of religious liberty. The Church is a different society, formed for different objects, and acting within altogether a different jurisdiction. It is a spiritual community, and clothed with no temporal power. Its objects are the maintenance of the true religion and the true worship of God in the world. It has its principles and laws, and is bound by the authority of Jesus Christ as its only King and Head. The Church has no more power in the State than the State has in the Church. They are perfectly distinct organizations, are pursuing different objects, and exercise a different authority. The liberties of the State are never in greater jeopardy than when the Church is invested with civil power; while the liberties of religion and the Church are sure to be endangered by giving ecclesiastical power to the State. The Church never acts more out of character, or more unworthy of her high calling, than when she arrogates to herself the authority of civil government, and endeavours by fire, or sword, or civil disabilities of any kind, to coerce men to receive her doctrines and worship. "My kingdom," says the Saviour, "is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." The Church has no secular organization; no secular head; no secular nature. She may not oppose force to force, as the kingdoms of this world do; nor may she exercise the force which this world exercises even in the execution of her own laws.

Such are some of the leading principles of religious liberty contained in the New Testament. The world is under lasting obligation for the illustration and defence of these principles to the independent churches in Great Britain. It was among them that the immortal Locke became so deeply imbued with that manly liberality of sentiment which distinguished him above the men of his age. Lord King, himself of the

established church, in his life of this celebrated philosopher, has the liberality to say, "By the independent divines, who were his instructors, Locke was taught those principles of religious liberty which they were the first to disclose to the world.—As for toleration, or any true notion of religious liberty, or any general freedom of conscience, we owe them not in the least degree to what is called the church of England. On the contrary, we owe all these to the Independents in the time of the commonwealth, and to Locke, their most illustrious and enlightened disciple." Nor let us withhold the honour that is due to the personal exertions of Cromwell himself. There never was a firmer friend to the rights of conscience than Oliver Cromwell. It was his interest in the cause of protestantism that induced him, on his assumption of the protectorate, to choose an alliance with Louis XIV rather than with Spain and Austria. He made his friendship valuable to France and Holland, that by their means he might exert the greater influence in behalf of religious liberty throughout Europe. Nor was his policy unavailing. He well nigh controlled the court of Versailles during the early part of the reign of Louis. It was the common remark in Paris, that Mazarin, the prime minister of Louis, "had less fear of the devil than of Oliver Cromwell." The suffering protestants throughout Europe, and even from the confines of Hungary and Transylvania, looked with hope toward the English commonwealth. The suffering Vaudois, under the duke of Savoy, long and gratefully remembered his merciful and princely interpositions, in their behalf, amid the mouldering ruins of their depopulated villages. Besides appointing a fast, and a general collection throughout England for these confessors, he wrote to the duke of Savoy, to the king of France, to the kings of Sweden and Denmark, and to all the protestant princes in Europe with the view of arresting these fearful persecutions. Nor "was any part of his negotiation with foreign princes more acceptable to his country than this."[1]

[1] For a full account of this, see "The Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, and the State of Europe, during the early part of the reign of Louis XIV, illustrated in a series of letters between Dr. John Pell, resident ambassador at the Swiss Cantons, Sir Samuel Morland, Sir William Lockhart, Mr. Secretary Thurloe, and other distinguished men of the time," by Robert Vaughan, D.D. of London University.

Nor do I refer to these declarations with the less reluctance because I am a presbyterian. It must be confessed that the presbyterians of Britain were as tenacious of civil power as the episcopalians; nor was there any denomination of Christians at that period, except the Independents, who, as a religious body, recognized to their full extent, the sacred rights of conscience, and who while in power accorded to others the rights which they advocated for themselves under oppression. This praise is awarded them by distinguished historians, who were themselves ministers and members of the established church.[1] And it is in no small degree to the influence of this very class of men, that the broad principle of religious liberty holds so prominent a place in the constitution of the American States. Such too are the principles distinctly recognized in the Confession of Faith and Form of Government of the presbyterian church in this land. We have never, in this respect, trodden in the steps of transatlantic presbyterianism. While we give an honest preference to our own doctrines and discipline, we claim no infallibility; we invest ourselves with no *jus divinum*, and cheerfully accede to others the same rights and immunities, both civil and religious, which we claim for ourselves. Our excellent Confession of Faith explicitly declares, "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it, in matters of faith, or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith and an absolute blind obedience is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also."

But it will probably be asked, has the church no power—no authority over her own members? Has she no discipline? And may she not admonish, rebuke, censure, and even exclude from her communion those who reject her doctrines, and pay no regard to her worship? She has all this authority, and is bound meekly and firmly to exercise it. She is not a voluntary society, associated upon principles of human invention, but a

[1] Grant's 'History of the English Church Sects;' Introduction to Col. Hutchinson's Memoirs; Brodie's 'British Empire.'

society divinely instituted and governed by the laws of her redeeming God and King. It is indispensable to her prosperity, that she be governed; that she be governed by laws well defined and understood. She must have rules for admitting, controling, and disciplining her members. And her discipline ought to be accordant with the high and sacred ends of her divine institution. "Ecclesiastical laws," says Mr. Locke, "are to be enforced by exhortations, and advice. Where these fail, there remains nothing further to be done but that such stubborn and obstinate persons, who give no ground to hope for their reformation, should be cast out and separated from the society. This is the last and utmost force of ecclesiastical authority." No man should complain, because he is made responsible to the church with which he has voluntarily united himself by irrevocable bonds. Nor should he, when he denounces her doctrines and government, think it a hardship if he is required to acknowledge his offence, or withdraw from her communion. "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject!" "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican!" But he must *hear*, and if he desires it, *must be heard*. By the laws of Christ, the most erring and most vile of his professed followers is entitled to a full and impartial trial. to pronounce sentence, or even the mildest judicial admonition without a hearing, is a direct violation of the great principles of religious liberty, the word of God, and the everlasting law of rectitude. A church can suffer no greater calamity than the loss of such a right. But it were a sad perversion of the truth to plead the rights of conscience for the neglect of wholesome discipline. "The free circulation of the blood, and the proper discharge of all the animal functions are not more necessary to the health of the body, than the discipline which Christ has instituted to the spiritual health and prosperity of his body the church." One sickly sheep infects the flock. And a black

flock would the church indeed be if she were embarrassed and frustrated in attempts to reclaim or exclude those who are unfit for her fellowship. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" Men who are "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine," may not, because they cannot have any fellowship with that truth which is one and immutable. I have given you evidence by an almost thirty years' ministry among you that I am not insensible that the peace of the church is broken, her strength divided, and her vigour impaired by foolish contentions: but contentions for substantial truth are not foolish. Men may "wrap up their deceptions in scriptural phrases, and even in language which is consecrated by the usage of the Christian church, and yet be apostles of error."

There are too extremes in the exercise of a faithful discipline which every Christian church should cautiously avoid. The first is, that it is a matter of indifference what religious principles a man adopts, and what form of worship he prefers. The Bible contains essential principles—principles which constitute the very elements and essence of the Gospel; which must be believed and loved in order to salvation; and which are so fundamental that if any one of them should be denied, the denial would in its legitimate consequences subvert the entire method of salvation through Jesus Christ. It forms no part of that religious liberty that is founded on the word of God, that it is of no consequence what a man believes. No where is this thought or feeling encouraged in the Scriptures, but every where discouraged, frowned upon, and denounced. "Keep specially clear," says a forcible writer "of uncommon pretenders to charity. Satan will mask his designs as long as he can, and so will all his ministers. Believe that God is love, that he is the great and essential charity. Be satisfied then with as much charity as he has shown, and do not think of improving upon your Maker by entertaining and expressing a more charitable opinion of sinners than himself."

The other extreme is to have no charity at all. There are things spoken of in the Bible which are neither fundamental to the Gospel, nor essential to salvation, and about which good

men may differ. Men may be ignorant and uninformed in these things, and yet be saved. And I would not dare to say that they may not misunderstand and pervert these things, and yet be saved, any more than I would dare to say how much indwelling sin is incompatible with true holiness of heart, or how much remaining unbelief is consistent with saving faith. The least truth perverted, as well as the least remaining sin in the heart, is without excuse; while neither of them proves that the bosom in which they dwell has no interest in the Son of God. I hold it one of the great duties of a Christian, to judge severely of himself; of others charitably. "Judge not that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." I may not necessarily break charity with men as Christians, with whom I would not deem it expedient, nor for edification to be united in the same ecclesiastical connections. I would hope not to sympathize with their errors; but I would charitably impute their errors to causes which may exist in the hearts of good men. "*Humanum est errare.*" I may err as well as they.

"Hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim."

The flock of Christ will be a little flock indeed, even after it is all gathered in, if there be not many sheep that are not of our own fold. The many mansions in our Father's house will be but sparsely inhabited, if it be not found at the last day that God our Saviour can hold fellowship in the church above with not a few with whom it is not for edification for us to maintain ecclesiastical connections in the church below. The charity that "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth," also "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things." As men may be heretics, and excluded from the Church without being delivered over to the secular arm, so they may err in judgment without being heretics. They may differ in their religious opinions, and yet be Christians; they may differ without animosity, without the fury of intolerance, without having recourse to courts of law, and without disturbing either the public peace or the charities of social life.

I do not know that I have expressed your views, my young friends, in the present lecture. For myself, I solicit no greater liberty of conscience than this, and I will not be satisfied with less. It is impossible for the Church to flourish either in alliance with the civil power, or controlled by its authority, except so far forth as it extends an impartial protection to her civil rights. Nor is it less impossible for her to flourish while composed of essentially jarring materials—of the mingled iron and clay—of men who believe and profess, and men who disbelieve, and deny, and ridicule the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel.

The liberty of conscience is your birthright. You are "not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." There is nothing in the Scriptures which debars you from full enquiry into all the truth, or which demands of you an assent to its doctrines, without an examination of the evidence that they come from God. You boast of this liberty. But it is this which renders you so fearfully responsible. It is this which gives the divine government such resistless claims upon you, if you turn your liberty into licentiousness, and under the specious pretence of this right, become sceptics, or deists, or the enemies of God and his truth, by whatever name they may be called.

LECTURE VI.

THE MORALITY OF THE BIBLE.

THERE is no one particular in which the Bible has effected a greater change in the condition of the world than its outward and visible *morality*. To say nothing of that spiritual character upon which the Scriptures every where insist, there is not now, nor has there been ever, any portion of the world where the principles of revealed religion have been received, where the most astonishing changes have not been produced in the moral habits of society. This justice must be done to infidelity, that while it has waged war upon the truths of the Bible, it has commended its moral precepts; and while it has ridiculed its miracles and prophecies, it has ingenuously acknowledged that its *morality* is altogether more pure and lofty than that which philosophy ever taught. And however involuntarily or incautiously made, such confessions are no unmeaning homage rendered to the truth of the sacred Scriptures. For, if disjointed, disfigured, mutilated, torn from its foundations, and deprived of all its natural life and vigour, as it has been by the great mass of infidel writers, the morality of the Bible has grandeur and excellence enough to extort the commendation of its enemies; what must it be, when undisturbed from its foundations, unsevered from its proper aliment, it is seen and recognized in its true power and excellence!

Neither pagan philosophers, nor modern infidels, nor the philosophical world in Christian lands have been without their moral theories. When the Saviour of men descended from heaven the Grecian and Oriental philosophy had obtained powerful influence over the thinking part of mankind;—the former prevailing throughout Greece and Rome, the latter throughout

Persia, Syria, Chaldea, and Egypt. "The Greeks sought after wisdom." And yet among them we find the sect of the Epicureans who believed that the world arose from chance; that the gods extended no care over human affairs; that the soul was mortal; that pleasure was the chief good; and that virtue was to be prized only as it contributed to man's enjoyment. The academical philosophy, from Plato down to the period when the academic school was transferred to Rome, was professedly a system of doubt and scepticism. Its disciples denied the possibility of arriving at truth and certainty; held it doubtful whether the gods existed, or did not exist; whether the soul is mortal and survives the body; and whether virtue is preferable to vice, or vice to virtue. The most profound as well as the most ingenious of this sect yielded to the notion that amid the endless varieties of human opinion, nothing could be decided. This evil was so deeply felt by Socrates, that he deemed it necessary that an instructor should be sent from heaven with special authority to reveal and enforce the duty of man. The Stoics held that man was bound to act according to his nature; that nature impels him to pursue whatever appears to be a good; that the great object of pursuit is not pleasure, but conformity to nature, and that this is the origin of all moral obligation. The oriental philosophy regarded matter as eternal, and as the source and origin of all evil and vice; and that the material creation in its present form, and the race of man, derive their origin not from the supreme God, but from some inferior being. The Persians asserted the existence of two eternal principles, the one presiding over light, the other over matter; the one good and the other evil.[1] The professed character of the gods of paganism was distinguished for crime, while the religion of those who worshipped them required to be immoral.

I hold it to be a truth capable of clear demonstration, that no man is better than his principles. To be virtuous he must possess virtuous principles. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." As his principles are, so is the man. There is an

[1] Murdock's 'Mosheim,' Warburton's 'Divine Legation,' and Cudworth's Intellectual System.'

indissoluble connection between the nature of his moral conduct, and the principles from which they flow. Any thing may be called by any name, and any thing may appear under any shape; but never can it happen that of "thorns men gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes." Men are governed in their outward deportment by their inward views and motives. It is so in politics, in literature, in science and the arts; and it is so in morals and religion. And yet, how often do we hear it asserted, that it is of little consequence what a man believes if his heart is right; that you must look at his character and not at his doctrine; that good men are to be found in pagan, Mahometan, and Christian lands, and of all creeds and professions; that moral conduct is not the result of any set of opinions; and that it is of no consequence what a man's faith is, if he is only sincere! But this is a delusive and destructive morality. If there be any truth in such a theory, moral principles are of no account whatever. One system of morals is as good as another, and those persons are just as likely to be virtuous who believe what is false, as those who believe what is true. But common sense instinctively revolts from such a doctrine, while all observation and experience evince its absurdity. Good conduct never grows out of corrupt principles, nor is evil conduct the natural result of principles that are good. Is it so that a man may be one thing in his principles, and another in his morality; one thing in his belief, and another in his character? By what sort of philosophy is it that he is thus divided against himself; that he is thus torn asunder, and while one part of him is pronounced good, another is pronounced bad? A man's principles are himself. His morality is himself. Suppose for a moment, that the hypothesis on which we are animadverting should be realized. Here is a man who is one thing in his principles and another thing in practice. He believes for example that the earth is a sphere, and yet he navigates it as though it were a plain. He believes that food is necessary to animal life, and yet he abstains from food. He believes that the hand of the diligent maketh rich, and yet he is a sluggard. He believes that fire will burn, and yet he plunges deliberately into the flames. He believes that

Jehovah is the true God and yet he worships the devil. You call him a madman; and well you may. But not more certainly than the man who believes that there is no difference between what is right and what is wrong, and yet forms all his plans and conduct with a view to that difference. Not more certainly than the man who believes there is no God and no hereafter, and yet fears God and shapes his deportment with a view to an hereafter. His morality must take its rise from his principles. Moral principles constitute the seed, the germ of which moral character is but the development.

Men are every where the subjects of moral law, and capable of moral actions. Their conduct as moral beings is good or evil, as it rests upon a true or false foundation, as it is determined by a true or false standard, as it flows from right or wrong motives. And hence it is that pagan morality is so defective. Detached from the Bible, it has no other guide than the passions of men, and those few principles which may be suggested by the lights of reason and nature. It is no caricature of pagan morality to say, that it had no settled standard of right and wrong, and that we look in vain throughout all their philosophy for any well established principles of duty, or motives and aims that commend themselves to an enlightened conscience. What is the nature and foundation of virtue; what is the rule of moral conduct; what is the ultimate object toward which it should be directed; in what does the duty and happiness of man consist? are enquiries which have never been satisfactorily answered by the unassisted powers of the human mind. What the practical results of these uncertain speculations were, the annals of all pagan history show. Nor are they any where more comprehensively exhibited than in the following declarations of the great apostle, concerning the whole pagan world: "They became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened. They were filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, deceit, malignity. They were backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, inventers of evil things, disobedient to parents, without natural affection, implacable and unmerciful." Their manners and customs, where not

dictated by the love of wickedness, seem to have been dictated by mere caprice and whim. What was virtue in one country, was vice in another; and what was unpardonable rudeness in one, was refinement in another. Egypt was distinguished for great corruption of morals, as early as the time of Abraham and Joseph. Their public festivals were celebrated by practices so shameful, that they disgrace the page of the historian. If from Egypt you pass to Asia Minor, you see the prominent traits of moral character still the same,—unrighteousness, malignity, luxury, effeminacy, and sensuality. If you look to Greece, in the early part of their history, you see brutal savageness in its most shameless forms; while, in the age of greater refinement, iniquity only "put on an embroidered garb, and of more delicate texture." The Olympic, Pythian, and Isthmian games, while they imparted that strength of body, and courage in battle, which were formerly the most enviable qualities which this nation knew, degraded and polluted their minds and morals to the lowest degree of debasement. Wherever indeed you read of the "heroic ages" of ancient times, you may be assured they are fruitful in crime and horror, in parricide and incest, and all those melancholy and tragic catastrophies which present the most dismal and hideous picture of our race. The monarchs of Assyria passed the greater part of their lives in voluptuousness and debauchery. The proud Semiramis, notwithstanding all the commendations passed upon her heroism, led her subjects a career of unrestricted voluptuousness and debauchery. The most brilliant ages of Babylon were most distinguished for dissoluteness, and even the greatest refinement in debauchery.—Gorged with riches, they tasked their ingenuity in the invention of all that could delight the senses, and alternately excite and gratify the basest passions. Here was that memorable temple in which every female was obliged by law once in her life to prostitute herself to a stranger, for the purpose of augmenting the public revenue. As a general fact, debauchery was not only allowed by the ancient pagans, but approved by their religion. Even as cultivated a mind as that of Cicero ragarded it as no crime. Horace represents Cato as commending the young men who

frequent the public houses of pollution, because they did nothing worse.[1] If such were the morals of the purest state of Rome, and of Cato, the severest censor of public manners, what must have been the most impure? I will tell you what they were. The emperor Nero drove through the streets of his capital with his naked mistress; and the emperor Commodus first dishonoured, and then murdered his own sister. "If these things were done in the green tree, what were done in the dry." Vice always descends from rulers to subjects. If such were the morals of emperors, what must have been the morals of the common people? And what but such a depravation of morals is to be expected where reason, blinded by appetite, is the only guide; where conscience has no firm mooring, and the only impulse is the fitful breath of passion? How could the doctrines of paganism excite to moral virtue? It is perfectly obvious from the character of their gods, and from their hopes of a voluptuous paradise, that the whole system of the pagan world had not the least tendency to produce and cherish virtuous emotions.

And how much better are the moral principles of modern infidels? Lord Bolingbroke resolves all morality into self love. And so does Volney. Hobbes maintains that the sole foundation of right and wrong is the civil law. Rousseau says, "All the morality of our actions lies in the judgment we ourselves form of them." Lord Shaftesbury declares that "all the obligations to be virtuous arise from the advantages of virtue, and the disadvantages of vice." Hume affirms, that "moral, intellectual, and corporeal virtues are nearly of the same kind." Have such moral principles ever reformed the world? Did they reform their authors? Where will such principles lead if carried out into practice? What are their fruits? What is there in an enlightened conscience that responds to their pretensions?

And are there not some systems of ethical philosophy which

[1] "Virtute esto, inquit sententia, Dia Catonis
Nam simul ac venas inflavit tetra libido
Huc juvenes, equum est descendere non alienas
Permolere uxores." *Sat. lib. I, s. 2, v. 32.*

are not found either among pagans or infidels that are far below the spirit of the Bible? What is the morality the foundation of which is simply what is useful and expedient; the standard of which is the spirit and maxims of this world; and the motives of which are purely mercenary and selfish? Can that be called morality which recognizes no immutable distinction between what is right and what is wrong; which has no reference to the obligations of the divine law; and is concerned only with our own interests? Can that be called morality which asks, not what is right, but what is profitable? which enquires not for duty, but for interest, for the opinions of men, for the spirit of the age? Such a morality is most certainly radically defective. It is the morality of the world, not of the Bible. It is a mere external morality. It has no thorough lodgment, no permanent abode in the hidden chambers of the soul. It is a superficial observance. It is what all morality must be, separated from the truth of the Scriptures:—a body without a soul—a whited sepulchre—splendid only in sepulchral magnificence.

The morality of the Bible is well and intelligibly defined. Its foundation, its standard, its motives are distinctly set before us, and ought not to be misunderstood. Why then is any being in the universe under obligations to be morally virtuous? Why is the Divine Being bound to be holy, unless because holiness is right, and he is capable of perceiving it to be so? And why are intelligent creatures bound to be morally virtuous, unless because they are so made as to be able to perceive, and feel under obligation to approve and practise moral virtue? "Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." If the Divine Being *were* malevolent, or selfish, would that circumstance bind us to be so too? The moral excellence of the divine character is a good and sufficient reason why men should be morally excellent. God requires them to be holy, because he is holy. The character that is right in God is right in creatures. It is in its own nature just what it ought to be. The Deity would not be satisfied with himself without possessing such a character; nor would virtuous and holy minds be satisfied with him, if he were not thus perfectly amiable and excellent. God is love; God is truth; God is rectitude; God is mercy; God is justice.

There is a wide and immutable difference between such a character and the opposite. The former is right, and the latter is wrong. Nothing can reconcile them. There is not, nor can there be any gradual approximation of them to one another. They are perfect opposites, and so will always remain. It would not be right for God to possess any other character than that which he does possess; and no considerations of profit and loss, no considerations of the probable tendency of any other character, can ever induce him to change, or modify it; nor were it possible to do so, except for the worse. The foundation of moral obligation therefore lies in the immutable difference between what is right and what is wrong, and in the capacity of intelligent beings to perceive that difference. I say in the capacity to perceive that difference; for in a fallen creature especially, that difference may not always be perceived, while the obligation to perceive it remains unimpaired. When we look at our own natures, and the natures of our fellow men; when we contemplate the relations we sustain to them and they sustain to us; unless our minds are blinded by wickedness, we cannot help perceiving that all the moral virtues are *right.* They grow out of our mutual relations, and not to practise them is *wrong.* And on this basis the Scriptures place our obligations to moral virtue.

It has been often asserted that *utility* is the foundation of moral obligation. Utility *to whom?* To *me?* Then indeed is the securing of my own advantage the great end. And what sort of moral virtue is this? Utility to the *universe?* Then let it be made to appear that throughout the vast empire of God no sinful thought or action was ever indispensable to the highest good. Nothing is more obvious from the Bible than that the reason why God requires moral virtue is, not because it is useful, but because it is right. He is "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity and cannot look on sin." He could not be bribed to do this for all the universe ten thousand times told. He requires the duties of morality because they are right, and in conformity with himself. He does not "do evil that good may come." He never requires men to do what is wrong, even though he foresees in many instances, that their

sinful conduct may be turned to the best account. It is utterly immoral to make utility the foundation of moral obligation, and to assign either the direct or indirect tendency of an action to promote happiness, as the reason why it ought to be performed. Moral virtue has a nature besides its tendencies to happiness. Just as truth differs essentially and immutably from falsehood, just as light differs from darkness, and sweet from bitter, does good differ from evil. No law can confound them; no beneficial tendency of the one, or of the other can alter their nature; but like the nature of the Deity, they will remain forever the same. To make utility the foundation of moral virtue seems to my mind to tear up all the foundations of moral virtue itself. Virtue is no longer virtue, and vice is no longer vice, if this theory be true. If this theory were true, then, if in view of the divine mind, vice is expedient, it is no longer vice; and if virtue is inexpedient, it is no longer virtue. And what wonder if men should abuse this reasoning, put themselves in the place of God, and decide that to be virtue which promotes their happiness, and that to be vice which promotes their misery? There have been such moral philosophers and they are well described by the apostle as—"men of corrupt minds, supposing that gain is godliness." Such a morality were the most changeful and evanescent thing in the world. No matter what its pretensions, it is mere selfishness, and radically hostile to all moral virtue. If virtue is any thing, it is virtue every where and always; and if vice is any thing—any thing but a name, it is vice always and every where. The divine nature is unchanging. It is virtue—the highest virtue; and nothing in the condition of this world, or other worlds—nothing in the divine purposes or government—nothing in time or eternity, can alter its nature. And this is one reason why, when the knowledge of God was lost in the world, there were no longer any just ideas of virtue and moral obligation. How is it possible there should be a sound morality where there is no knowledge of God? There is a chasm in morals which can be supplied only by a just acquaintance with the Deity.

The Bible teaches us that the true and only standard of morality is the divine law. The rule, or standard of duty, is a

different thing from the foundation of moral obligation. No being in the universe is so capable of judging of the nature of moral virtue, of the difference between what is right and what is wrong in all the circumstances and relations of human existence, and of what is and what is not conformed to his own character, as God himself. No creature has the right to do this to any such extent as would make his own will, or judgment, or notions of any kind, the rule. The only standard to which all human conduct ought to be conformed, and conformity to which is rectitude, is the law of the great Supreme. If there be a God, he must rule; his will must be law. He has no superior, no antecedent; and there is no being of equal claims and rectitude. He only has a right to give law, and he only is able to give it in conformity to the eternal rule of his own perfect nature. We have perfect assurance that his law is like himself, and that he requires nothing but what is right, and forbids nothing but what is wrong. Because his own character is spotless and pure, he requires purity in others. Nothing but moral virtue is the object of his approbation and complacency, and therefore he can require nothing else. His will is the safe standard in kind, weight, and measure. Whose will should be law, if not His in whom men live and move and have their being; whose, if not the will of that great lawgiver whose authority is uncontrolled and infinite? How can we wonder at the fluctuating morality of the pagan nations, when they have no unfluctuating standard? how can it be otherwise than that their ideas of moral virtue should be low and contracted, when even their very vices are prescribed as virtues?

If the previous remarks are just, it scarcely need be said that the grand motive of a sound morality is a heart-felt respect for God as the rightful lawgiver. It is a remark of the infidel Volney, that "there is no merit or crime in intention." Just the reverse of this is the morality of the Bible. What it uniformly requires is virtuous conduct springing from right motives. It aims at the heart. It addresses its claims not to the love of pleasure, nor to the love of the world, nor to the love of fame and power, but to an ingenuous regard for God. It is a sense of duty that governs, and of duty springing from

love to God. It is a sense of right. Our selfishness may be ever so wisely directed; its calculations may be ever so shrewd and politic; but they can never rise to the elevation of holy love. Nay, "though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and my body to be burned, and have not love, I am nothing." The morality and the religion of the Bible are identified. "This is the love of God that we keep his commandments." There is no love to God without keeping his commandments, and there is no keeping his commandments without love to God. There is no religion without morality, and there is no morality without religion. In the language of a modern Scottish writer, "Morality is religion in practice; religion is morality in principle."[1] The morality of the Bible springs from the predominant principle of holy love. And it is an all-governing principle—fruitful, life-giving, and powerful—stronger even than the energetic principles of evil within us, and making the yoke of obedience easy, and its burden light.

Such are the distinctions between the morality of the world and the morality of the Scriptures. The former has no foundation on which it can rest; no unvarying standard, no high-born impulse. It may have instances of cautious abstinence, of ardent devotement, of heroic magnanimity; but they will not bear the inspection of the omniscient eye, nor the analysis of eternal truth. Their elements are pride, vanity, and egotism. Actions whose fame has resounded through the world, achievements whose praise is recorded on the page of history, men whose proud name has been encircled with a halo of human glory from age to age, will all be found wanting when once weighed in the balances of eternal truth and rectitude. It is a remark of Foster, in his Essay upon the causes for the the neglect of evangelical religion by men of taste, that "the moral philosophers seem anxious to avoid every thing that might subject them to the appellation of Christian divines. They regard their department as a science complete in itself; and they investigate the foundations of morality, define its laws, and affix its sanctions in a manner generally so distinct from Christianity that the reader would almost conclude reli-

[1] Wardlaw's Christian Ethics.

gion to be another science complete in itself. It is striking to observe how small a portion of the ideas which distinguish the New Testament from other books many moral philosophers have thought indispensable to a theory in which they professed to include the entire duty and interests of men. A serious reader is constrained to feel that there is either too much in *that* book, or too little in theirs." The justice and importance of these observations will occur to the mind of every one as he adverts to the treatises of Paley, Gisborn, Brown, Stewart, and M'Intosh. It should excite no great surprise in a Christian audience to be told that the science of morals is founded on the principles of divine revelation, and that the great principles of morality are inseparable from the word of God. Moral philosophy is the science which treats of the nature of human actions, of the motives and laws which govern them, and of the ends to which they ought to be directed. And surely such a philosophy is found in the Bible alone. For the heart to be right toward man, it must be right with God. Motives for the regulation of human conduct are suggested in abundance by men whose moral theories were never identified with the sacred volume; but they have been addressed, if not to the worst, to some of the most unworthy passions of the human heart. But the morality founded on such a basis, and supported by such incentives, is devoid of principle. It knows no law but the opinions of men, and the ever fluctuating state of human society. It invests itself with different forms, as the character of the age, the state of the times, and the circumstances of the individual require. It is one thing in Europe and another in Asia; one thing in the palace, and another in the mansions of the poor; one thing amid the quietude and searching observation of a rural village, and another amid the bustle and concealment of a crowded city; one thing on the Exchange, and another amid the retirement of private life; one thing in the equable seasons of untempting prosperity, another amid the embarrassments and agitations of calamity and misfortune; one thing in peace, and another in war; one thing at home, and another abroad. It is one thing to-day, and another thing to-morrow. It is unstable as water and

variable as the wind. It is a temporizing, time-serving morality. It complies with the hour and the occasion. It humours the current of opinion and circumstances. It is a system of moral obsequiousness, that is every where pliant and conciliating, except to the claims of sterling integrity.

But with what different views do we regard the morality of the Scriptures. On every page of this sacred volume we see a system of ethics as pure, as lofty, as invariable as its divine Author. We meet with perpetual evidence of those great principles of unbending virtue, which, while they purify and regulate the interior, also purify and regulate the exterior man; and which produce an equability of character, a "calm constancy," a tenderness of conscience, a kindness of spirit, as far removed from the morality and philanthropy of the world as are the cold abstractions of heathen philosophy from the sermon on the mount. The Bible settles the great question, What is duty? It is every where familiar with that all-important principle, that *to do right, men must do what is right in itself, from right motives, and with a right spirit.* These two things God has joined together, and no man may put them asunder. It is not enough that a man's conscience is satisfied that he is doing right, unless he does it with a right spirit and from right motives. Nor is it enough that he acts from a right spirit and right motives, unless he does what is right in itself. He may not speak what is untrue, because he does it with benevolent intentions; nor wreak a malignant revenge upon his enemy, because his conscience may be so blinded as to justify his malignity. Conscience may be so blinded as to lead a man sincerely to do what is abomination in the sight of God. The rectitude of his conduct may not depend on his sincerity. He may act from prejudice, selfishness, and malevolence; and the time may come, when, notwithstanding all the convictions of his conscience, like Saul of Tarsus, he may bewail the madness of his spirit, and see that he was altogether without excuse. His conscience may adopt false conclusions, conclusions in which light is resisted because he loves darkness; while in opposition to evidence he may persist in these conclusions, because a wrong spirit has paramount power. It is only when

conscience is obeyed from a right spirit, that we have convincing evidence that our conduct is right in the sight of God. We may do many things that seem to be right from a wrong spirit; and we may do many things that are wrong from a right spirit. The morality of the Bible teaches us that to do right we must do so from a right spirit.

Such a morality is the same thing every where. In every portion of it you see the divine original. What it is now, it always was, and always will be. The knowledge and love of God impart a simplicity, a symmetry, a beauty to the theory of morals which insinuate themselves into every part of the system, and by a thousand imperceptible shades and impulses adorn and control the whole. What beautiful simplicity, what resistless energy, when contrasted with the heavy and complicated movements of an infidel, a pagan, or a pharisaic morality! God requires it—this is the motive which sways the Christian moralist. You may descant upon the dignity of his nature, upon the beauty of virtue, the turpitude of vice, and the claims of a well-regulated selfishness; but how weak and unattractive are such considerations compared with the authority of that Supreme Being whom he loves and adores!

Would you reform the manners of human society, you must aim at the heart; you must diffuse throughout the mass the leaven of truth; you must throw around the conscience the strong bonds of obligation, and draw the heart by the cords of love, as with the bands of a man. You must extend the empire of the great Lawgiver over the understanding, over the memory, over the imagination, over the warm and grateful affections, over the whole soul. This alone will suppress the germinations of crime, and check wickedness in its bud. This will impart the seeds of virtuous principle, which, in the maturity of their growth and expansion, will exemplify on the largest scale the great practical axiom, distinguished alike for its certainty and its perspicuity, "Make the tree good and its fruit good."

The only specious objection to the morality of the Bible is that it is one of its leading doctrines that moral virtue avails nothing toward making an atonement for sin; that no transgressor of the divine law can merit anything by his good works;

that his justification is entirely gratuitous and rests upon the righteousness of another; and that in the whole matter of his salvation, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." If this is so, of what avail, it is asked, are all the moral virtues, and what encouragement have men to do the will of God? We need only reply to this, that the foundation of man's acceptance and justification before God is one thing, and the character or moral condition in which he is justified is another. The foundation of his justification is the finished atonement, the obedience unto death of God's eternal Son. The character, or moral condition in which he is justified is that of a repentant sinner, an humble believer in Jesus Christ. But what is the faith which is thus the condition of his acceptance? Is it a cold assent to the truths of the Gospel? Or is it a warm, vivifying sentiment of the heart, working by love and putting all the powers of the soul into vigorous action in deeds of righteousness? "What doth it profit, though a man say he have faith and have not works?" Do the Scriptures recognize any such faith as this, even though a man may say he have it, and that it is the true faith? "Can such a faith save him?" Never. If it have not works, "it is dead, being alone." It is no faith. Works of righteousness are not merely the fruits of faith, but they enter into the nature of all the faith that lives, and breathes, and throws its animating pulsations throughout his moral frame. So that the method of gratuitous justification by faith in the Son of God, instead of annihilating, confirms; instead of diminishing, augments; and instead of countervailing, gives a new impulse to the primeval obligations and motives to moral virtue. "How shall we who are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Is this undermining the obligations to moral virtue? "Ye have been bought with a price, and that not of silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; wherefore glorify God in your bodies and spirits, which are his." Is this diminishing the motives to moral virtue? "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all that they which live

should not henceforth live unto themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again." Is this weakening the force of moral obligation? "Do we make void the law through faith? Yea, we establish the law." "This do, and thou shalt live," is to the transgressor an impracticable condition. It is too late for a sinner to dream of being justified by deeds of law. But there is another law. "Believe, and thou shalt be saved." Under the first covenant, obedience secures salvation; under the second salvation secures obedience. He "loves much who has much forgiven;" and he only obeys who loves.

If I urge upon you then my young friends the claims of morality, it is the morality of the Bible. It is not the morality of Seneca or Plato. Nor is it the morality of the young man who said, "All these have I kept from my youth up;" but whose "heart was bound in fetters of gold." There is a morality that will never become the possessor of heavenly treasures. Nay, it were "easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle" than for such a morality to enter into the kingdom of God. You must practically acknowledge the God of heaven as your king and love him with an undivided heart. You must take up your cross and follow your Saviour, or you are not worthy of him. True morality will lead you to love him above all others, and prefer his service above that of all other masters. Without this it were in vain to think of governing your life by his example and laws. A mere outward morality will serve you and your generation a little while; it may even diminish the aggravation of your guilt and the weight of your sufferings in the future world. But it can avert neither; and if this is all you have to plead in the presence of your Judge it will "profit you nothing."

LECTURE VII.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE UPON THE SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

BY social institutions I mean those which form the basis, or grow out of the various relations of human society. Man is a social being. His physical, intellectual, and moral constitution have a manifest reference to a state of social existence. Destitute of that strength which distinguishes many animals, unfurnished by nature either with weapons to resist, or speed to escape from their attacks, care for his safety alone would lead him to unite himself in close alliance with others of his species. The years of childhood and old age are conditions in which he must of necessity depend upon others; and in claiming during these periods of infirmity, sustenance and protection from his fellow-men, he must consent in the days of his own strength to anticipate and deserve them. Though well nigh the most helpless of all the animal creation, no longer a weak, isolated existence, he has been constituted the lord of this lower world. Instead of being the prey of ravenous beasts, he holds the brute creation in fear and servitude; instead of being exposed to the tempest, his dwelling bids defiance to the winds; and when the hunger, want, and debility which he has succoured in others, become his own lot, his past services return to him at the hands of his fellows, though it be after many days. But not alone from his physical nature is he impelled to seek the society of his species. His moral and intellectual faculties determine him no less strongly to a social state, and pre-eminently fit him for it. Some of the noblest faculties of his soul, as well as some of the most amiable and exalted of his natural-affections could be exercised only in such a condition. Benevolence, complacency, gratitude, and heroism would all lie

dormant if he were an isolated being. Next to the pure fountains of spiritual joy, the most delightful sources of his enjoyment are those for the first time unlocked when he meets his fellow-man. Isolated man can scarcely be said to have the capacity for lofty thought, or great achievement. The noble efforts of human power and genius, of which there are so many monuments in our world, have been made under the strong encouragement, the powerful incentive of society. Led by these impulses, and guided by the light of nature alone, man has no doubt made vast progress in the arts of social life. He has founded empires, builded cities, collected armies, and has framed laws for their government and guidance. Literature and the arts have flourished in a greater or less degree of splendour, and a beneficial, though imperfect code of morality has crowned the work of his mind and hands, and raised it to the highest elevation which his own unaided powers have permitted.

Still however the structure is incomplete. It rests on no sure foundation, and is also imperfectly cemented and fitted together. The elements of which it is compounded are of such conflicting qualities, that they can be brought into harmony and perfect union, only by the all-pervading influence of a pure system of morality, founded on pure religion. To be sensible, of this, it is necessary to take a glance at the various relations of human life where no supernatural revelation has ever been made. And here permit me to remark, this is the only method of ascertaining the appropriate influence of a supernatural revelation upon the social institutions. What was the state of human society before the Bible was given to men? What has been its condition since, and what is it now? There are evils in the social state; but had they no existence before a supernatural revelation was known? In what condition did the Scriptures find the social institutions? In what condition are these institutions found at the present day, where the Bible has never been known, or heard of? Infidels have charged not a few of the social calamities in the world on the introduction of Christianity. But I cannot help thinking, that if they did not feel an interest in rejecting the sacred Scriptures; if these holy oracles

did not so severely reprove their wickedness and rebuke their pride; and if they were not either profoundly ignorant, or obstinately perverse; they would never resort to so dishonourable and disingenuous a mode of reasoning. The true questions in such a discussion are, has human society ever been well organized without the Bible?—Have the social rights and obligations been any where understood and respected, where the Scriptures have had no existence?—And where they have been best understood and respected, and their various relations have been peaceful and happy, has the Bible disturbed this organization, trampled on these rights and obligations, and rendered men contentious and miserable? We are bold to say, that an enlightened and honest answer to these enquiries will do honour to the Bible. Where the Scriptures have found men without any social bonds, there they have laid the foundations and reared the superstructure of institutions that have endured for ages. Where they have found society loose and disjointed, and formed upon principles that must ensure its overthrow; there, as fast as they could exert their influence, have they without fail reduced this chaos to order and beauty. And where they have found it unrefined and impure, gross and cruel; there have they, even in the most corrupted ages of Christianity, silently effected a change in the social relations which has gradually elevated the minds and habits of men to a visible and acknowledged superiority over all pagan lands.

There seem to be two sources from which man might of himself arrive at a considerable degree of social culture and enjoyment. The first is from the invention of some system of religion, which by superstitiously influencing his fears and his hopes, would restrain him from crime, and by its imposing ceremonies and dark mysteries, influence him to virtue. The second is by the careful cultivation of those intellectual faculties which God has given him, by the exercise of which his more base and degrading propensities may be subdued, and his intellectual and moral nature be improved and elevated. But to show how insufficient these are to produce the end in view, look at the two celebrated nations of antiquity, which have the most to boast of in these respects, Persia and Rome. The re-

ligion of the Persians was the purest of all uninspired religions, and the most calculated to elevate the soul. In the heavenly bodies they worshipped their unknown author, and in the two presiding principles they sought an explanation of the mingling of good and evil upon the earth,—that problem which has so long perplexed and confounded unenlightened reason. But their creed, however ingenious, could only exercise the intellect and amuse the curiosity of its followers. It was destitute of all salutary influence upon their social relations. The history of Persia is a compendium of crimes, suffering, and intolerance. A despot ruled the state, and polgamy, that despotism in miniature, gave law to the private and domestic relations of the people. In all that philosophy and moral culture alone can do for the social institutions, ancient Rome stands preeminent among all nations. Their religion was indeed gross and puerile in the extreme, exercising an unhappy influence upon the lower orders, but disbelieved by the priests who taught it, and by the worshippers in secret, who ridiculed it. Yet so far as the most ingenious and sublime speculations of their sages could refine and improve them, they were favoured beyond example. Look then at their history. In proportion as their philosophy improved, the integrity, the purity, the happiness of their social relations declined; until the state became the legalized organ of oppression and cruelty, the marriage bond the pledge of encouraged licentiousness, the domestic circle the scene of terror, and that love of country for which Rome was distinguished in the best days of the early republic, was extinguished in the blood which flowed indiscriminately from her friends and her enemies.

I have anticipated much that might be said in regard to the relation which exists between the state and its citizens, as these relations are developed in pagan and antichristian countries, in the lectures on the influence of the Bible on human laws and government. If any man will examine the government of Rome from the institution of the regal government, to the expulsion of Tarquin; from the consulship established by Brutus, to the magistracy of the military tribunes; from the usurpation of Cinna, to the supreme power of Augustus; from the

empire of Augustus, to that of Nero; from Nero to Valerian, and from Valerian to Constantine; he will see dissimulation, revolt, tumult, slaughter, revolution, despotism, servitude, peace and war, and where the evils of peace were not unfrequently the worst calamities. Often was that fair land deluged with blood from the ambition of rivals to the throne. And then again, new schemes of mutual ambition would carry fire and sword to the remote and peaceful nations, till the flames of civil war raged in almost every part of the world. The resources of some great mind, increased and irritated by his calamities, possessing all the vices and none of the virtues of his species, would develope itself in all its hideousness, and wreak its vengeance in atrocities that cannot be thought of without horror. While as often elated with success, and dazzled with the pomp and consequence of station, it would again seek repose in brutal indulgence, or sanguinary persecutions. And how much better was ancient Greece, or Gaul, or Germany, or Britain? How much better are the modern nations of paganism, where the power of Christian lands does not restrain their ferocity.

Just in the measure in which the influence of the Bible has been extended to the nations have these evils been diminished or entirely removed. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me," says the anointed king of Israel, "and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me. He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God: and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." The relation existing between the State and its citizens, the Bible recognizes as of divine appointment. The foundation of civil government is the will of God. Life, liberty, and property, peace and order, public morals and religion, have never been left by the benevolent author of our social existence, to chance, or anarchy, or the social compact. Government is an ordinance of heaven. "The powers that be are ordained of God," not for their own honour and aggrandizement, but for the good of their subjects—not to gratify the pride, minister to the lusts, and subserve the ambition of rulers, but for the tranquillity,

virtue, and prosperity of those they govern. Where, in pagan and Mahometan lands, are rulers taught this important and salutary lesson from any such sources as make them feel its authority, or constrain them to respect the rights of the people? Or where, except in lands illumined by the light of supernatural revelation, do the people, on the one hand, know and feel that they have rights, and are themselves clothed with the authority to see that they are respected; or on the other, know and feel that government is an institution of heaven? Christian princes, it is true, have not always exerted the happy influence which the God of nations requires them to exert. Nor have Christian nations always respected their rulers, or asserted their own rights with firmness, and with the meekness of wisdom. But where have antichristian and pagan princes done it? And where have pagan nations, in a single instance, been influenced by any other motive than the restive, factious determination to put down one despot for the sake of elevating another? But look through Christian lands, and see how often the prerogative of the prince has been limited, and the rights of man asserted by a free and virtuous people. Witness the condition of England from the time of Alfred to the present hour. Witness the condition of France, though more often scourged by severe persecutions, from the reign of Clovis to the accession of Louis Phillippe. Witness the triumph of Germany over Leo X and Charles V. And witness our own memorable revolution. What had been the condition of this brave and high-minded people in those days of peril but for the Bible? And what had been our condition at many a fearful crisis of our public affairs since that period had these American States not been restrained and governed by the spirit of that holy book? Our obligations to the religion of the Bible are not always in this respect duly appreciated. Why is it, that at every popular election, instead of some petty broil, we are not involved in oceans of blood? It is because there is found through the blessing of Almighty God, a mass of public virtue, a weight of moral principle founded on the word of God,—that subdues and restrains the "wrath of man." Why is it, that with every calamitous and disastrous measure of our government, we do not witness

the scenes that were exhibited in Rome, under the reigns of Tiberius and Nero? It is because we have been taught from the lips of the divine Saviour himself, to "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's." It is because his holy apostles have given us the injunctions: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." It is because we have been taught to respect, and reverence, and pray for our rulers, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty; knowing that this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." Such a spirit constitutes a virtuous community; and with such a spirit no people can promote discord and revolution, until "patience has had its perfect work," and the last limits of Christian forbearance have been far exceeded. Who does not see with how much more benevolence the Scriptures control the relation between the state and its citizens, than any other book, or any other set of opinions, or any other maxims, however high their authority, or however extensively received? Who does not see that the crimes and sufferings so long attendant on the administration of human governments, would soon be unknown, and the contentions, revolutions, and blood which have so long desolated the earth soon disappear, if the Scriptures were once duly honoured, and the voice of God regarded in preference to the seductive influence of aspiring, designing, and corrupting men?

The most important of all the social institutions is *marriage*, the primeval parent source of all the other relations. Nor is there any expression of the divine wisdom in determining the condition of the human race more significant and delightful than this sacred institution. It is by this relation that the world we inhabit is constituted a collection of families; where the best natural affections are cherished, and the worst subdued; where there is a community of affections and interests; and where are the highest inducements to a reciprocal and virtuous influence, and especially in forming the character of the rising generation. The inhabitants of this earth are not brought into existence by a single act of creative power, such as gave exist-

ence to the angelic creation. These unfallen existences, with all their shining hosts, and in all the variety of their rank and excellence, were formed at once, and with no successive dependence of one generation upon that which preceded it. Nor has there probably been any increase or diminution in their numbers, since that early dawn of the creation when these "morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." And such will be the relation of the "spirits of just men made perfect," after the resurrection. "They neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." The race of man, on the other hand, is perpetually increasing, and the current of human existences flowing on, augmented by almost innumerable tributary streams to the end of time. It required more than finite wisdom so to arrange this perpetually augmenting population, as most effectually to consult its social interests, its honourable, virtuous character, its immortal destiny. And who does not see with what admirable efficiency these ends may be secured, and secured only by the nuptial bond? To test the verity and importance of this remark, let us bestow a few considerations on the methods by which human society may be supposed to be organized and continued.

The first is by a promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, unrestrained by any law, and uncontrolled except by the consent of the parties. Such has been the usage of a few barbarous lands; such is the doctrine of Robert Dale Owen and other modern reformers; and such are the habits of a few gregarious, anomalous communities, even in Christian countries at the present day. From the cradle, the sexes are taught that there is no barrier even in thought against the most universal indulgence. And what shall be said of such a society but that it is polluted and poisoned at its fountain-head, and a hideous mass of corruption and rottenness? There is no moral safeguard in such a community to protect it against the most disastrous and desolating evils that can be commissioned to scourge its degraded and guilty inhabitants. Marriage is a term of reproach; the parental relation is unknown; and the unhappy offspring of such a concubinage are thrown out upon the world

with no restraints of parental love and wisdom, and no obligations of filial affection and reverence;—monsters in crime, giants in iniquity, and in a little while the fit objects of such sweeping judgments as desolated the old world by the waters of the deluge, and the cities of the plain by a tempest of fire out of heaven.

Look then for a moment at the system of polygamy, under which a man has a plurality of wives. This evil was indeed tolerated among the ancient patriarchs and Hebrews. But it was a perversion of the original institution of marriage. "Moses suffered it for the hardness of their hearts; but from the beginning it was not so." All the evils of that early and idolatrous age of the world could not be remedied in a moment. And such was the state of society, that not even until the advent of the Saviour was the institution of marriage restored to its primeval integrity by revoking the permission of polygamy and divorce. Experience has abundantly and painfully proved that polygamy debases and brutalizes both the body and the mind, and renders society incapable of those generous and refined affections, which, if duly cultivated, would be found to be the inheritance even of our fallen nature. Where is an instance in which polygamy has not been the source of many and bitter calamities in the domestic circle and to the state? Where has it reared a virtuous, heaven-taught progeny? Where has it been distinguished for any of the moral virtues; or rather, where has it not been distinguished for the most fearful degeneracy of manners? Where has it even been found friendly to population? It has been reckoned that the number of male infants exceeds that of females, in the proportion of nineteen to eighteen, the excess of the males scarcely providing for their greater consumption by war, seafaring, and other dangerous and unhealthy occupations. It seems to have been the "order of nature that one woman should be assigned to one man." And where has polygamy ever been friendly to the physical and intellectual character of the population? The Turks are polygamists, and so are the Asiatics; but how inferior a people to the ancient Greeks and Romans? I spoke of the domestic circle of the communities under the influence of polygamy;

but is there any thing worthy of the name in such countries? Let the universal seclusion of females from the eye of man, and the unsleeping jealousy of their husbands furnish the answer. What is the domestic circle, or the society of friends, where the presence and all-subduing influence of *woman*, its brightest ornament and glory, is banished?

> "Hail, woman, hail! last formed in Eden's bowers,
> Midst humming streams and fragrant breathing flowers,
> Thou art, 'mid light and gloom, through good and ill,
> Creator's glory, man's chief blessing still.
> Thou calm'st our thoughts, as halcyons calm the sea,
> Sooth'st in distress, when servile minions flee;
> And O, without thy sun-bright smiles below,
> Life were a night, and earth a waste of wo."

I am not extensively acquainted with the domestic condition either of Turkey or Persia, nor have I been able to find access to those sources of information which I have desired; but if the few historical notices of some of the royal families of these countries, which have met my eye, are a faithful index to the evils of polygamy, it is among the most fruitful sources of misery and crime. What can be expected from a system where woman fades at twenty, is decayed at thirty, and before five and thirty sinks to her grave?

Look now at that modification and combination of the two preceding systems which is found in those countries where the nuptial relation is only temporary, and where, while the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes and a plurality of wives is interdicted, the frequency of divorces opens the door to the most unbridled licentiousness. In ancient Rome, the matrimonial institution was regarded as a mere civil contract, established for purposes of convenience and expediency, protected during its continuance by the civil magistrate because it was deemed a blessing to society, and by the law of the Twelve Tables continued only during the pleasure of the husband. The sober and well-attested fact in relation to this arrangement is, that in all those countries where polygamy was not tolerated, the frequent and rapid succession of divorces and marriages took the place of polygamy and introduced all its evils. Especially

was this the case in Rome. A glance at the history of that nation will render us sensible of this. Such was the facility of obtaining divorces among the Romans, that the nuptial tie offered not the slightest resistance to motives of ambition, avarice, or irregulated passion. The private history of women of the first rank is but a succession of marriages and divorces; each new marriage yielding to one more recent, with the same readiness with which itself had displaced a former union. Perhaps it may be thought out of place to enumerate examples of this nature; and yet nothing else can give us a just conception of the extent of the evil. Octavia, the daughter of the emperor Claudius, married Nero, and was repudiated by him for the sake of Poppæa. Poppæa herself was first married to Rufus Crispinus; then to Otho; and at length to Nero, by whom she was killed by a violent blow, and at a period when the trials of her sex should have been her protection. For his third wife, Nero married Thessalina, and to possess her person murdered her husband. Julia, the daughter of Augustus, was married first to Marcellus, then to Agrippa, and then to Tiberius. Livia Oristella was on the eve of a marriage with Caius Piso, when Caligula, enamoured of her beauty, carried her off by force, and in a few days after repudiated her. Marc Antony, who was married to Octavia, the sister of Augustus, repudiated Octavia because he was in love with Cleopatra. Such examples you will find almost endlessly diversified in the Annals of Tacitus. The extent to which this licence was carried may be also learned from the poet Martial, who tells us that when the Julian law against adultery was revived as a preventive to the corruption of the age, within thirty days Thessalina married her tenth husband, thus legally evading those restraints which the laws had imposed upon her licentiousness. What is the marriage bond worth in such a state of society? And where is the state of society essentially better than this without the Bible. It can hardly be said there is any such thing as social institutions where the nuptial vow is the sport of every caprice and passion, and where it is violated without penalty, and even without remorse and shame.

And now let us turn, as from a dry and parched desert, to a

fruitful land, from this disgusting survey, and see in how different a light the Bible considers the matrimonial relation from that in which it is viewed by Pagan and Mahometan lands, and by unbelievers in divine revelation in lands that are Christian. This sacred Book regards it as a religious institution; as owing its origin, not to earth, but to heaven, not to the light of nature, but to a divine command; as an institution established by the Creator himself immediately after the formation of man, and subsequently put under the protection of his law. It inscribes in deep legible characters on every nuptial altar, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder!" It explicitly defines marriage to be the act of uniting two persons in wedlock and only two. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh." The degrees of consanguinity within which this union is lawful are not left to the judgment of fallible men, but in the institutions of the inspired legislator of the Hebrews, are marked with perfect definiteness. And when once formed, the Bible pronounces this connection a perpetual union, and to be dissolved only by crime or death. "The woman that hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband." And with what tenderness does it prescribe the reciprocal duties of this relation! "Husbands, love your wives,"—not according to the maxims of a cold and changing philosophy—not after the fashion of this world,—but "as Christ loved the Church. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord; for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church." Who that has seen heedless and frequent infringements upon these precepts, has not seen the wisdom of them in the disastrous consequences of their own folly,—not merely upon the peace, and harmony, and mutual confidence that ought always to distinguish this happy relation—not merely upon their own respectability and influence in the Church and in the world—but upon the character and conduct of their children? Rarely can you find affectionate children, where there is an unkind husband; or dutiful children, where

there is an undutiful wife. And how solemnly do the Scriptures protect the sanctity of the marriage vow! God required that the adulterer and adultress should be punished with death. He affirms before the world, "Whoremongers and adulterers, God will judge." With an emphasis never to be forgotten, he demands, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." Nothing but the Bible can set bounds to human licentiousness. There is a place of which the unerring voice of inspiration has said, "He knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell." There is a character of which the same unerring voice declares, "None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life." There is a sin of which this Book of God often speaks, but on which it rarely expatiates—a sin which the pure and holy Author of the Bible does no more than significantly indicate with the one hand, while with the other he opens to its obdurate and grovelling perpetrator the doors of the eternal prison, and points to the "lake which burns with fire."

In speaking of the social institutions, we may not forget how much the Bible has done for woman. The condition of woman was more exalted in Rome than it has ever been to my knowledge in any land where the day spring from on high has not visited her. The nations of the east have kept her in a state of ignorance and slavery. Among the Greeks, she occupied a very inferior sphere; so that if she was restrained from evil, she was helpless to do good. While the laws of Rome, on the other hand, allowed her greater liberty and consideration than she had heretofore enjoyed, still was the sex without those restraints of morality and purity which alone can preserve her from degradation. No happy influence did she exert upon the public or private welfare of the state. Her influence ascended to ambition; politicians intrigued with her; and her liberty degenerated into licentiousness. The former deluged the streets of the capital with its best blood; and to such an extent was the latter carried, that among the several decrees which passed the senate, under the reign of Tiberius, against the li-

centiousness of female manners, it was ordained "that no woman whose grandfather, or father, or husband was a Roman knight, should be allowed to make her person venal!" The laws of a nation are a faithful and instructive history of its manners. And what must have been the corruption of female licentiousness in the highest ranks of society? If such was the character of a Roman baroness, what must have been that of the subordinate classes? There can scarcely be a more degrading view of woman than this, unless it be the condition which she now presents in pagan lands. And what is that condition, now, in the nineteenth century of the Christian era? Hated and despised from her birth, and her birth itself esteemed a calamity—in some countries not even allowed the rank of a moral and responsible agent—so tenderly alive to her own degradation, that she acquiesces in the murder of her female offspring—immured from infancy—without education—married without her consent—in a multitude of instances, sold by her parents—refused the confidence of her husband, and banished from his table—on her husband's death, doomed to the funeral pile, or to contempt that renders life a burden:—such is her degraded and pitiable condition in almost all except Christian lands. The Bible has an appropriate place for woman, a place for which she is fitted and in which she shines. It elevates her, but assigns her her proper sphere. It does indeed exclude her from the corruption of the camp and the debates of the forum. It does not invite her to the professor's chair, nor conduct her to the bar, nor make her welcome to the pulpit, nor admit her to the place of magistracy. It bids her beware how she overleaps the delicacy of her sex, and listens to the doctrines of effeminate debators, or becomes the dupe of modern reformers and fashionable journalists. It asks not to hear her gentle voice in the popular assembly, and even, "suffers her not to speak in the Church of God." It claims not for her the right of suffrage, nor any immunity by which she may "usurp authority over the man." And yet it gives her her throne; for she is the queen of the domestic circle. It is the bosom of her family. It is the heart of her husband and children. It is the supremacy in all that interesting domain,

where love and tenderness and refinement of thought and feeling preside. It is the privilege of making her husband happy and honoured, and her sons and her daughters the ornaments of human society. It is the sphere of piety, prudence, diligence in the domestic station, and a holy and devout life. It is the sphere that was occupied by Hannah, the mother of Samuel; by Elizabeth, the mother of John; and by Mary, the mother of Jesus. It is "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of God, is of great price." It is the respect and esteem of mankind. It is that silent, unobserved, obtrusive influence by which she accomplishes more for her race than many whose names occupy a broad space on the page of history. More than this, too, does the bible do for woman. It opens to her the stores of knowledge. It proscribes her no intellectual advancement. It commits to her intelligent culture the minds of the rising generation. It tells her that her peculiar province is to embellish and adorn. It opens before her the loveliest spheres of active benevolence. And while it tells her to be a "keeper at home," it at the same time points her to the poor, the afflicted, the widow, the orphan, the sick, and the dying, and says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is to visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and to keep herself unspotted from the world." It does more for her than for the stronger sex, because it gives her more piety than it gives to pious men; more ardency and devotion in her religious affections; more numerous, as well as more illustrious examples of converting grace; a greater reward, and a brighter crown. Nor can she ever know what she owes to the Bible, until she is presented, by her great Lord and husband, faultless before the throne.

But let us turn a moment to another of the social relations: I mean that which exists between parents and children. I have often wondered why there are so few scenes of domestic joy painted in pagan history; and whence it is that we never find access to the bosom of a well regulated and happy family in pagan lands. May not the reason be that the materials for the picture never existed? Pagan historians there were, of a high standard of excellence; and pagan poets, whose classical

sublimity and beauty it would be treason to the cause of a polished and elegant literature to question. But their themes are conflict and revolution; deified heroes and heroines; a base and corrupting mythology; the beauties and tranquillity of pastoral life; or the passion of a shepherd for some beautiful boy. Though many of the pagan poets maintain the first rank of excellence, and abound with imagery that might naturally have found culture and aliment amid the more virtuous and lovely scenes of domestic joy, yet do these scenes seem even to their polished minds to be almost interdicted themes. Before the introduction of Christianity there was a strong tendency to sacrifice the domestic to a more public life. The citizen of Rome and Athens was distinguished, not for his domestic virtues, but for his literary attainments and his public valour. He employed his life in the field, in the academy, or in the forum, but found little to interest him at home. He lived abroad amid the alluring example of a licentious world; he threw himself into the current of its seductive temptations; but rarely found interest and happiness in the society of his children. Home was a word dissevered from all those high and holy associations, inseparable from it in a Christian family. He was known rather as a citizen than as a father, a son, a friend. He had indeed his household gods, his altar and his fireside; but he had no voice of supplication and praise—no bond of God's eternal covenant sealing blessing to him and to his for a great while to come. In ancient Rome, under the emperors, it was even considered an advantage to be without children; and fathers often renounced them for the estimation and flattery that was showered upon them by those who might be expectants of their inheritance. More than once has an affluent citizen proved too powerful for his accusers, simply because he was childless. And it was no strange occurrence for children as frequently to become the accusers as the advocates of a father, and as ready to destroy as to protect him against his enemies. A father pleading for his life, while his son stands forth his accuser—what a scene were this in Christian lands! Nero poisoned his mother; and Seneca, one of the wisest and best of the heathen philosophers, was accessory to

the base transaction. Where in all the annals of Christendom is registered so foul a deed! Men never sin so obstinately as when they sin from principle. And even at the present day, it is deemed a religious duty in pagan lands, for parents to destroy their children; and, as though God had with awful severity inflicted the *legem talionis*, in return, for children to destroy their parents.

But see how the Scriptures speak of this relation. Mark how they honour and protect it, and how they define and enforce its corresponding rights and duties. To the parent they say, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." To the child they say, "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." To the parent they say, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged." To the child they say, and in language never to be forgotten, "The eye that mocketh at his father, and refuseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Under the Mosaic law, the man that cursed his parent was surely to be put to death; the men of his city "should stone him with stones that he die." The whole scope and spirit of the Bible consider the appropriate performance of the relative duties which result from the relation of parent and child as laying the foundation of every private and public virtue. They recoil from the arbitrary power and cruel tyranny of a parent, and from the hardened impiety and obstinate stubbornness of a child. The Spartans venerated age; but how much more energetic and authoritative is the language of the Jewish lawgiver when he says, "Thou shalt rise up before the face of the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God." Have my youthful readers been instructed by example, by precept, by unsleeping vigilance and unwearied effort, and by a discipline equitable and kind, in habits of virtue; have their minds been enlightened and their wants supplied; and are they conscious that it has been the united aim of their parents by their self-denial, their counsels and prayers, to render them religious, useful, and happy; permit me to remind

them, they owe this distinction to the Bible. And where is the parent who is surrounded with the tokens of filial piety, and whose heart has been habitually comforted by all that is tender and grateful in the affections, and respectful and dutiful in the deportment of his children, but feels that for all this he is indebted to the same divine source? There is a beautiful incident in the life of Christ, which illustrates the influence of the Gospel upon domestic life. It was among those last sublime and tender exhibitions of his nature which took place upon the cross. Forgiveness, love, and resignation had already beamed divinely through the horrors of that scene, and attracted the eye of the believer to a picture where otherwise all was so sad and revolting. The Saviour was in his bitterest agony. The guilt of dying men was weighing upon his soul; interests incalculably vast were absorbing his attention, and he might well be supposed to have lost sight of those by whom he was surrounded. In such an hour, amid the depths of his own sorrow, who would wonder had he overlooked the claims of earthly kindred! But at a little distance stood his mother. Near her, he beheld the youngest and best beloved of his disciples. Those earthly ties were about to be sundered, and he would not leave her without a support to her advancing years, nor the young disciple without a guide for his inexperienced youth. "Woman," said he to the first, "behold thy son!" To the latter, "Son, behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home."

The history of pagan nations is an instructive study, though it is little else than a narrative of crime. It teaches us how helpless man is to guide himself in the path of virtue and happiness by his own unaided powers. It teaches us how much we are indebted to the Bible; how much of our social advantages we owe to its pure spirit which has breathed over the chaos of nations, and brought order, light, beauty and fruitfulness from the shapeless void. It teaches us to be thankful that "the lines are fallen to us in pleasant places," where the endeared names of husband, wife, parent, child, speak with a tenderness to our hearts which we cannot appreciate, unless we have traced in the history of the past, how little these ties

have been valued. No author sets this in a stronger light than Tacitus in his Annals of the Roman Empire. The hand of that masterly historian must have trembled as he delineated the picture. There you will find a narrative of all that can shock the tenderest sensibilities of our nature; all that man can perpetrate in crime; all that the arch enemy can bring up from his dark kingdom to disturb and ruin. Suspicion, massacre, and licentiousness—the conspiracy of wives against their husbands, and husbands against their wives—men every where falling upon their own sword—families whose peace is disturbed by violence and ruined by intrigue—children sacrificed by the machinations of a mother—the wife murdering her husband for the purpose of wedding her paramour—women "practised in the trade of poisoning"—this is paganism and in the most enlightened age of Rome. But it is not Christianity. Let a man compare the present state of society in Protestant countries with the state of society under the dynasty of the Cæsars, and he cannot fail to see what the Bible has done for the social institutions. Let him go into the interior of the first and most polished families in Rome, and he will bless God for a supernatural revelation. Let him mark the difference with which the social relations are regarded by the wisest and most virtuous of pagan moralists, and a well instructed Christian teacher; let him see how in Christian lands, they bear the test of experience, and endure the proof of trials—how the spirit that sustains them grows cold only in death, and is extinguished only in the grave; and then let him go into lands unenlightened by the Gospel, and observe how the sweetest charities of life are destroyed by the suspicions of envy, the jealousies of love, and violence of ambition, the thirst for power, and at best decay when the flower of beauty and the graces of youth are gone; and he will adore the Father of mercies for that blessed Book "more to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold."

And yet are there those who would have us believe that the religion of the Bible is a morose and unsocial religion. If to have no sympathy with wickedness is to be unsocial, then is it an unsocial religion; but if to promote all that is kind and virtuous and pure and true,—if to take pleasure in all that

subdues what is malignant and ferocious, what is ambitious and cruel—if to sympathize with all that elevates and transforms the human character and makes it the ornament of human society here, and the glory of angelic society hereafter, be social; then is it truly and in the highest degree friendly to social institutions. There cannot be a more gross misconception than that the religion of the Scriptures is an unsocial religion. Every where it inculcates the gentle and kind affections. If there be softness, sweetness, cheerfulness, and honour in the intercourse between man and man, to what are they to be attributed, if not to the power of that heaven-born "charity, which suffereth long and is kind, which envieth not, which vaunteth not itself, and is not puffed up;" which "doth not behave itself unseemly, and seeketh not her own;" which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things;" without which we "are become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal!" We see not how an unsocial spirit can spring from such a source. And yet so it is, that the Bible is made to answer for all the moroseness and severity in the world, when it is known to enjoin all that is benevolent and cheerful in the social affections. Let every Christian man therefore bear in mind, that the Bible, with wonderful wisdom, adjusts its claims to the relations which men sustain to time as well as eternity; to this world as well as the world to come; and that it is one of the distinguished glories of its religion, that while it lives above the world, and walks with God, instead of retiring from earth and renouncing the intercourse of social life, it carries its disciples into the midst of human society to purify, reform, and elevate it, and there "let their light so shine before men, that they seeing their good works, may glorify their Father which is in heaven."

LECTURE VIII.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE UPON SLAVERY.

WHILE treating of the influence of the Bible upon the Social Institutions, there is one subject we cannot pass over in silence, notwithstanding the difficulties attending it. I allude to the relation existing between master and slave. The difficulties are intrinsic, growing out of the subject itself, as well as the enterprise and character of the age. At the present day, and in the present condition of our country, it is a subject of great importance; and it becomes every one in forming his judgment concerning it, to turn to that sacred book in which we profess to find a guide and instructor, and submit his opinions to the unerring decisions of the oracles of God. I do not know that I have any personal interest in giving a perverted or partial view of this vexed question. Indeed I find it no easy matter to take such a view of it as satisfies my own mind. The Bible is the fountain from which we are to draw, not only our religious doctrines, but our rules of duty. "I have always observed," said an able and wise divine, "that when people become better than the Bible, they are very apt to be wrong." We certainly cannot depend upon the reasonings of men, however plausible their arguments, as we may depend upon the decisions of God. All our notions of property, all our abstract reasonings upon the rights of man and his natural freedom and equality, all our principles of moral science and in all their varied applications, must be ultimately brought to the infallible standard revealed from heaven. God is our teacher. It is not for man to sit in judgment upon any of the truths which he has made known. "God never left his works for man to mend." His wisdom is unerring; nor is there any greater presumption than for us to refuse to make

the Bible the standard of our duty, and be satisfied with that standard. Have we a written communication from heaven, whose author is a being of universal charity, boundless knowledge, and eternal truth! Then from this source, and this source alone, are we bound to derive our opinions and our instructions on every subject on which it addresses us. Not more truly "would an infidel be labouring in his vocation" in charging errors upon the inspired penmen of this sacred book, than in relying upon his own reason as the ultimate standard of moral duty, and in taking upon himself to teach the inspired writers, rather than suffer them to teach him. It is an unhappiness that the public mind is in such a state of febrile excitement in relation to slavery, that it is difficult to speak the whole truth in relation to this subject without giving offence. But we may not forget, that this state of feeling has nothing to do with our application of the great principles of moral duty as revealed from heaven. It decides nothing; is variable and fluctuating; while truth and duty, as God has revealed them, remain the same.

Slavery has been defined by Dr. Paley, to be, "the obligation to labour for the benefit of the master, without the contract, or consent of the servant." This relation has existed in a great variety of forms, and degrees of severity. Very often it has been a condition marked by injustice and cruelty, attended with no adequate remuneration for labour, great civil disabilities and personal sufferings, great domestic wrongs, and great intellectnal and moral degradation. And there are instances, as facts show, in which it has existed unaccompanied by any of these evils. These are evils that have been wickedly superinduced by the cruelty and cupidity of men, rather than evils which necessarily and essentially belong to the relation itself.

Long before the Bible was given to the world, slavery had an extensive prevalence throughont the oriental nations. So far from introducing the evil, it found the earth filled with it, and has silently and gradually so meliorated the relation between the master and the slave, that in the progress of its principles and spirit, it must ultimately either abolish this re-

lation, or leave it resting upon a basis of the purest benevolence and the source of mutual advantage. This, we purpose to show is the appropriate influence of the Bible upon slavery. Nor do we design to extend our remarks beyond this single point. What is the legitimate influence of the Bible upon slavery? This is the only question which falls within the range of appropriate discussion in these lectures.

We cannot take an intelligent view of this question without a glance at the condition of slavery in those countries where the influence of the Bible has never been enjoyed. The great antiquity of the Assyrian empire, extending beyond the period when letters were invented, leaves the customs of the ancient Assyrians in great obscurity. Five of the Canaanitish tribes were the vassals of Chedorlaomer for twelve years, and obtained their liberty by an open revolt. Abram was an inhabitant of Assyria, and at the time of his recovery of Lot from Chedorlaomer and his allies, he was the proprietor of several hundred "trained servants, born in his house." From the predatory nature of their wars, it is probable that the condition of slaves in Assyria was not essentially different from the condition of the same class of men in the surrounding countries. The manner in which slaves were treated among the Babylonians the Persians, and other nations of remote antiquity, was such as "excluded them from every privilege of society, and almost every blessing of life." They were dependent on the caprice of imperious masters, and were unprotected by the laws. They might be tortured, maimed, or put to death, at the arbitrary will of their masters. In these early ages, in times of great public calamity, men often sold themselves for slaves. While Joseph was the prime minister of Pharaoh, and during the seven years' famine, the people came to him and said, "Buy us and our land for bread; and we will be servants unto Pharaoh." Joseph granted their request, and said unto them, "Behold I have bought you this day, and your land for Pharaoh." Before this time, Egypt was a limited monarchy. The people were free, and had lands independent of the crown. Now they became vassals, feudatory tenants, and the government despotic. The condition of slaves in Egypt we know

was sufficiently abject and degraded. We need no greater evidence of this, than Pharaoh's treatment of the children of Israel, and more especially his cruel order to the midwives. Nor were they enemies, nor the children of enemies, who were subjected to this severe servitude, but the descendants of a family who had been the saviours of Egypt, and the builders up of royal power. Nations whose unmixed ferocity and thirst for revenge were more generally satiated by the indiscriminate butchery of their enemies; who denied them even those common funeral rites which, in the opinion of the times, were necessary to the repose of the soul after death; who directed even their captive kings to be taken to prison and slain; regarded it as a mitigation of the laws of war to substitute slavery for death. Adult males were usually put to the sword, and the women and children captured and enslaved. A distinguished writer on the principles of political law, remarks, "In former times, it was a custom almost universally established, that those who were made prisoners in a just and solemn war, whether they had surrendered themselves, or were taken by main force, became slaves the moment they were conducted into some place dependent on the conqueror. And this right was exercised on all persons whatever, even to those who happened to be in the enemy's country at the time when the war suddenly broke out. The prisoners themselves and their posterity were reduced to the same condition." In some countries, insolvent debtors were sold for slaves. There were periods in the Roman history, when if the debt were not discharged within thirty days after a number of citations, by the direction of the prætor the public crier proclaimed in the forum, "Let him be punished with death, or sold beyond the Tiber!" In the institutes of Justinian, slaves are said to become such in three ways--by birth, where the mother was a slave; by captivity in war; and by the voluntary sale of himself by a freeman. In Greece, the disproportion between freemen and slaves was nearly in the ratio of ninety to four hundred. This large portion of the population, according to the account given by Mitford, were not only slaves, but nothing could exceed the insult, the injury, the cruelty, to which they were subjected. The

Spartan youth hunted them as wild beasts, for the sake of making themselves expert in the use of arms. "A scanty and disgusting dress, and dog-skin cap, distinguished them from all the rest of the inhabitants. Those who were too robust had to be enfeebled by various kinds of ill-treatment; and if the masters did not do this, they became themselves liable to a penalty. Every slave annually received a certain number of stripes to remind him that he was a slave! Hymns of a nobler kind they were not allowed to sing; but only gay and sensual songs. To complete their degradation, they were sometimes compelled to sing songs in disgrace and ridicule of themselves; and to the same purpose they were also compelled to perform indecent dances. In order to make the sons of the Spartans loathe the vice of drunkenness, the slaves were compelled to intoxicate themselves in public assemblies. When they became too numerous, they were murdered clandestinely; every year, at a certain period, the young Spartans, clad in armour, used to hunt them; and to prevent their increase they were killed with daggers."[1] The same author relates an affecting anecdote respecting the slaves of Sparta. When, during the Peloponesian war, the Spartans became apprehensive of the influence of their slaves, they made proclamation that the most meritorious and heroic among them should present themselves before the magistrate for the honour of freemen. In conformity with this invitation, two thousand presented themselves for this honour. The offer, however, was but a lure to detect the most aspiring and generous minded of those unhappy beings, and drew out their choicest spirits. Instead of the promised freedom, all were inhumanly slain, in accordance with the atrocious policy of that severe and sanguinary state. The slaves of Greece were generally branded like cattle. According to the laws of Lycurgus, they could neither be emancipated nor sold. In Sicily and Italy, they were chained and confined to work in dungeons. Rome was a continual market for slaves, where they were commonly exposed naked. It is computed by the historian Gibbon, that this class

[1] The Nature and Moral influence of Heathenism, by Tholuck. See Biblical Rep. for 1832.

composed one half of the inhabitants of that extensive empire, and could not have been less than sixty millions. As a body of men, they were considered dangerous to the welfare of the state, and were therefore depressed in every way. They were left entirely at the disposal of their masters, who might treat them in whatever manner they pleased, and who were invested with absolute power and authority over them. The aged, the sick, and the infirm, were carried to an island on the Tiber, where they were suffered to perish. Vedius Apollo, an intimate friend of Augustus, fed his fishes with the flesh of his slaves. Nor was this degradation of limited extent. A single individual in Rome had slaves to the amount of four thousand one hundred and sixteen. When the master was murdered, and the murderer could not be detected, all his slaves, with their wives and children, were put to death. There was a class of slaves among the Romans, called the Ostiarii, who were chained like watch-dogs before the houses. The laws of Rome regarded them all simply as property; not as persons, but as things; and as far as they could do so from the nature of the case itself, hardly distinguished them from brutes. Nor was it until the time of the emperor Adrian, more than a hundred years after the birth of Christ, that masters were divested of the arbitrary power over their slaves which they possessed in the days of the republic and the Cæsars.

Such was the condition of slavery in pagan lands. Such was essentially its condition when God called Abram from an idolatrous country, to make him the founder of the Hebrew State. Such was its condition when God gave the moral and civil law to Moses on Sinai and in the wilderness. Such was its condition when Nehemiah the Hebrew reformer, a man of no common integrity and boldness, roused the minds of that degenerate community to a conviction of their violated obligations. Such was its condition when the Saviour descended as the great Teacher of men, and when his Apostles so faithfully and fearlessly published and enforced the great truths and duties of the Christian dispensation. Such was its condition during all the progressive revelations which God gave to men down to the period when the sacred canon was completed. Slavery

most certainly had existed, and still existed in its worst forms, and with all its most fearful and appalling attendants and consequences. It existed extensively among the Jews, even down to the days of the apostles. Tacitus mentions that there were 20,000 slaves in the army of Simon when Vespasian was marching against Jerusalem.

Here then, in view of these plain and affecting facts, we propose a grave question. How did the Scriptures treat this solemn subject? What is the course which Moses and the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles pursued in relation to this deeply interesting matter?

It is not difficult to conceive of a course which they *might*, and in the judgment of some persons, *ought* to have adopted. They might have reasoned thus.—Slavery is wrong. No man, no set of men have a right to deprive another of his personal liberty. The obligation of service at the discretion of another is void. Without the contract or consent, or crime of the servant, such an obligation is in all cases sinful. All men are born equally free and independent, and have the same right to their freedom which they have to property or life. In all its features, the whole system of slavery is utterly at war with the law of nature and the law of God. Justice and humanity shrink from it. It is unjust in the same sense and for the same reason, as it is to steal, to rob, or to murder. It destroys the lives, depraves the morals, corrupts the purity, and ruins the souls of men. It discourages industry, makes a mock of the marriage vow, shuts out the light of religious truth from more than one half mankind, and reduces them to a degradation below the dignity and responsibility of intellectual and immortal beings. It is an evil therefore that may not be endured. The owners of slaves must every where be denounced as wicked men. They must be held up as the objects of public censure and obloquy. They are giants in cruelty and crime. They are menstealers, robbers, pirates, and may no more have a place in the Church of God on the earth than they can be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. The system of which they are the abettors must be put down. No matter by what revolutions in Church or State; no matter by what agitations,

or insurrections: it must be put down. It is a sin, and cannot be abolished too soon. Duty is our's, events are God's. No matter how disastrous the consequences of arresting it, it must be arrested, be they what they may!

Such a course as this I say the Bible *might* have recommended. And why did it not recommend such a course? It was not from inadvertance, because it frequently adverted to the subject. It must have been from design. The evils of slavery were under the eye of the sacred writers, and met them every where. They were wise and good men, and under the plenary inspiration of the Holy Ghost. They were divinely instructed in the best method of fulfilling their great commission, and of carrying the designs of it into execution. The great Author of the Bible exercised his wisdom in this feature of his revelation as well as in every other. Nor can it be doubted by any, except those who would invalidate all confidence in his word, that he has selected the best method of instructing the world upon this important subject. There was in the nature of things but one best method; and that method was not only known to God, but he was under a moral necessity of adopting it. Those who find fault with the instructions of the Bible in relation to slavery, directly arraign the rectitude, goodness, and wisdom of him who does all things after the counsel of his own will. Nor may it be supposed there was any want of sensibility in the sacred writers to the deplorable state of the slave population. Nor did they want firmness and energy of character; but were every where bold, determined, and steady to their purpose. They were never rash, but never fearful of opposing themselves to the swelling, menacing tide of the corrupt propensities and passions of men, nor hesitated to do all that they could for truth and right, for religion and virtue, for order and happiness, and for the protection of the oppressed, however formidable the opposition they met with, however great the sacrifices, or however imminent the danger. The reason why they did not pursue the course to which we have referred must have been that it was not the true and right course. It was neither right in itself, nor best for the master or slave, for the church or the world.

What then *was* the course which the Bible pursued? In giving this book to mankind, its wise and benevolent Author undertook the work of a great reformer. His object was to benefit the world, and subdue it ultimately to himself, by setting in motion a series of moral influences, that were silently to operate for good among the nations, and gradually to renew the face of the earth. His plans were vast and magnificent, and would not be accomplished in a day. Nor did he fail to count the cost of the enterprise. If there were evils in human society, he modified and mitigated them, because to have done more, would in the end have been to accomplish less. If there were existing institutions, long and deeply imbedded in the frame of human society, the abuse of which could not but be deplored, he so regulated the institutions themselves as to sever them from their abuses, while he breathed into all his moral instructions and government a spirit that should finally eradicate all evil, and fill the earth with holiness and salvation.

Nor is there any subject to which these remarks are more applicable than that of slavery. Let us turn our thoughts in the first place, to what may be gathered from the Old Testament in relation to this subject. In glancing at the early history of the Hebrews, and before the giving of the law to Moses, we have already seen that the fathers of that nation, the patriarchs, possessed slaves in great numbers. And yet we do not find that God reproved these holy men for being the proprietors of slaves. He did not at that time forbid slavery. Though, if he designed to do so at all, it would seem to us to have been the proper time for him to have required Abram to emancipate his slaves, yet he made no such requisition. He had just called him out from the corruptions of a pagan empire, for the purpose of founding in his family his visible church, and in them of setting an example to the world of a society that should be under his own guidance and direction. And yet he did not make it a condition of Abram's adoption into his family that he should give freedom to the servants, that were bought with his money, that were born in his house, or that were given to him by Abimelech. Instead of this, he so far recognizes and sanctions the proprietorship of this patriarch

in his servants, that he required every male among them to be circumcised, and claimed for them all the privileges of the covenant of which circumcision was the seal.[1]

If we pass from the days of Abraham to those of Moses, we find a moral law revealed from heaven, and a code of civil statutes, in both of which the existence of a state of servitude is distinctly recognized, without being forbidden. In the fourth commandment it is written, "the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid servant." And in the tenth commandment it is written, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man servant, nor his maid servant." If from the moral we turn to the civil code of the Hebrews, we find the following facts. As one of its great and capital principles, it forbids the slave trade, or the seizing of those who are free and selling them as slaves. "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." This is the deliberate judgment of the divine mind in relation to every branch of this nefarious traffic. It is an offence punished with death. The original man-stealer and the receiver of the stolen person must lose their life under the Mosaic law. The slave captain and the negro dealer are here admonished of their reward. This code also recognizes the distinction between slaves and hired servants. "It shall not seem hard unto thee when thou sendest him away from thee; for he hath been worth double a hired servant unto thee, in serving thee these six years."[2] So that when this code speaks of servants, it speaks of them not as hired free-men, but as slaves. The Mosaic law refers to the following ways in which a Hebrew might lose his liberty. In extreme poverty, he might sell himself. "If thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond servant, but as a hired servant and a sojourner he shall be with thee and shall serve thee unto the year of the Jubilee."[3] A father might sell his

[1] Gen., xvii, 10-13, 27. [2] Deut., xv, 18; Lev., xxv, 39, 40.
[3] Lev., xxv, 39.

children. "If a man sell his daughter to be a maid servant, she shall not go out as the men servants do."[1] Insolvent debtors became the slaves of their creditors. "My husband is dead and the creditor is come to take my two sons to be bondmen."[2] A thief, if he had not the money to pay the fine exacted from him by the law, was by the sentence of the judge to be sold for the benefit of him whom he had robbed. "If a thief be found, he shall make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft."[3] As the Hebrews were liable to be taken prisoners of war, and sold for slaves, so a Hebrew slave who had been ransomed from a gentile, might be sold by him who ransomed him to one of his own nation, and the price of his redemption was "reckoned from the year that he was sold unto the year of jubilee."[4] The Hebrews were also allowed to hold slaves whom they purchased from the surrounding nations, who should be "their possession, and an inheritance for their children after them."[5] All the prisoners of war also that were taken by the Hebrews were slaves. "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make an answer of peace, that all the people that shall be found therein shall be tributaries unto thee and shall serve thee. But if it make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it, and shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword, but the women and the little ones shalt thou take unto thyself."[6] In these seven ways, slavery might originate among the Hebrews. And it is worthy to be distinctly remarked, that with the exception of those slaves that were purchased from surrounding nations, and those who were taken in war, it was a state of servitude originating with the consent of the servant, or growing out of his fault. It was also a servitude greatly modified by very many important mitigations. Every where the Jewish law is most scrupulously protective of the person of the slave, while it allows for the master's peculiar relation, on the ground that the servant is "his money." While it recognizes the right of the master to the possession of the servant, it recognizes no rights that are

[1] Exod., xxi, 7. [2] 2 Kings, iv, 1. [3] Exod., xxii, 3. [4] Lev., xxv, 50.
[5] Lev., xxv, 45. [6] Deut., xx, 14; Numbers, xxxi, 18, 35.

inconsistent with the high nature of his being, but is itself the guardian of every right, founded on his obligations as a moral and responsible agent, to God or his fellow men. As in the patriarchal, so it was in the Mosaic age: the slave passed under the bonds of God's covenant, was consecrated by his master to God, and was educated in his fear. The law guarded his person from severity, in some cases by the death of the master, and in others by his own immediate freedom. He enjoyed all religious rites and privileges, not excepting the sabbath, the year of jubilee, the annual festivals, the new moons, the day of atonement, and other seasons of appointed rest. He had a sure and certain support, and was entitled to all affection and kindness. Every where God admonished the Hebrews against treating their slaves as they themselves had been treated in Egypt, and as slaves were generally treated in surrounding countries. In addition to this, let it be borne in mind, that no *Hebrew* could by the laws of Moses be a slave for a longer term than six years, unless by intermarrying with his master's servants, or for other causes, he chose to remain in servitude; and at the end of the six years, he was to be sent out liberally furnished. A female Hebrew servant also, frequently became the wife of her master, or the wife of his son; and in that event was entitled to all the privileges of honourable matrimony, or a lawful daughter. I cannot help thinking, that the system of servitude under the laws of Moses, so far as it regarded slaves who were themselves Hebrews, was not unlike the system of apprenticeship in Great Britain, and in this country, where a child is bound out for a term of years, and at the end of that period the parent receives a stipulated compensation for his services.

The two most revolting features of slavery among this people are recorded in the following paragraphs. "If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall surely be punished;" and the punishment was *death*. "Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his money." The reason of this law I suppose to be this. If the servant survived a number of days, it could not be so clearly proved that the punishment occasion-

ed his death, as to justify the death of the master. It might rather be charitably presumed that he died from some other cause. There would not be conclusive evidence of deliberate malice. The pecuniary interest which the master had in his servant was a presumption in his favour, and the law would not condemn unless on the strongest testimony. And was not this right; and are not, ought not all penal laws to be construed as favourably as possible to the accused? The other paragraph is this. "Of thy bond-men and thy bond-maids which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you. Of them shall ye buy bond-men and bond-maids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy and of their families that are with you which they beget in your land: and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bond-men for ever." It seems difficult to deny that this feature of slavery existed among the Jews until the final destruction of their city. The language of the passage is that of injunction, but it implies nothing more than that the Hebrews were *permitted* to procure slaves of the surrounding nations, and hold them in perpetual bondage. No considerate man supposes that they were required to do this, and that the Hebrew who neglected to do it was living in sin. We have two remarks to submit in relation to this general permission. The first is, that the kind of servitude to which foreign slaves were subjected was in all respects the same with the servitude of the Hebrews themselves, except that it was perpetual. They were protected by the laws; were circumcised, and introduced to all the blessings and promises of God's peculiar people. But there is another remark. The condition of the Hebrews was a peculiar condition. The nations with which they were surrounded were nations whom, for their total apostacy from the worship of the true God, their degraded idolatry, their unnatural cruelty and pollution, the Hebrews were required to exterminate. There was one condition on which they were relieved from the execution of this decree. It was that the Canaanites submitted to their invaders, renounced their idola-

try, and became Hebrews. Their conquerors were the ministers of the divine justice, commanded to execute their sentence, and to relax its rigour so far as their enemies submitted to their government and their religion. The right to destroy carried with it the right to enslave; while the slaves purchased their lives by the voluntary surrender of their liberty.

I cannot think that I have set the slavery of the Hebrews in too fair colours. I have not designed to do so. Most certainly, it was a very different thing from what it was in the surrounding nations. Look at the contrast, and see the influence of the Bible upon slavery, even at that early age of the world. Slavery there was among the Hebrews but few of its evils. The entire dispensation of the Jews made at once a bold and decided invasion upon its abuses and eradicated them. And yet it is a fact equally clear that it left the relation between master and servant untouched, and instead of denouncing slavery as a crime, is offended only with its abuses.

Such was the melioration which the Bible introduced in regard to this large class of our fellow-beings, for whom it so kindly and wisely legislated under the old dispensation and down to the coming of Christ. And nothing is more obvious than that, while it exerted the happiest influence upon this relation of social life, it did not overturn and destroy it. The same essential principles of reform, and no others, we find every where developed in the New Testament. Employed exclusively in propagating the doctrines of their Divine Master, his apostles no where opened a crusade upon the despotism of the government under which they lived, or upon the institutions sanctioned by its laws. Melioration in civil affairs they left to be brought about by the silent operation of those divine principles which purify the heart; which have in their progress banished such an amount of sin, tyranny, and slavery from the world; and which are destined, in the same heaven-like way, to complete their work. In all the mutual intercourse of men, the great maxim which they enforce is one and unchanging: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets." This spirit runs through the whole of the New

Testament, and addresses itself equally to the master and the slave. One cannot but observe with admiration the high-born wisdom, the meekness, and gentleness with which the apostles conducted this discussion. The religion they taught is a religion of love. It breathes peace on earth and good will to men. What incongruity with such a spirit to have excommunicated every slaveholder! or to have made immediate emancipation the condition of church membership! What incongruity with such a spirit to have excited revolt among the Christian slaves, or to have disseminated notions which must have revolutionized the principles of social order, and broke down all the distinctions of rank and condition? They did nothing of all this. They were taught from above, and their wisdom and meekness gave efficacy to their ministrations. They had access to the slave population of the Roman empire; they penetrated "Cesar's household;" they urged the cause of their Master in the palaces of kings, and carried the hearts of masters and slaves by gaining their impartial attention, and expressing the gentleness of Christ.

I have been not a little affected with their instructions to both these classes of men. Mark their delicacy, and at the same time their tenderness and sympathy when they address the poor slave—just weak enough to begin to think he is an emperor, because by the grace of God he has become a Christian. "Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it. But if thou mayest be free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman. Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he is called!" How wise! how kind! How different from some modern reformers! I seem to see the great apostle laying his paternal hand upon the head of the poor slave, and hear him say, Care not for your slavery. You are the Lord's freeman. Stay where you are. You shall have a throne hereafter. And that your master may share it with you, let him see your spirit of love and meekness. "Be obedient to your masters according to the flesh, with good will doing service as unto the Lord, and not unto men. Account your masters worthy of all honour that the name of God be not blasphemed!" If you have Christian

masters, demean not yourselves superciliously on this account, but rather more affectionately and dutifully; "despise them not because they are brethren, but rather do them service because they are faithful and beloved!" Nor is it to the slave only that they address their counsels. While they neither excommunicate, nor even rebuke the master, simply because he is a master, they do not withhold their rebuke of all his oppression and injustice—nay they thunder forth their anathemas against the degradation, the ignorance, the misery, the wickedness, and every violation of the personal and domestic rights to which he subjects his slaves, and solemnly remind him of the fearfulness of that day when God shall call him to account. They admonish him not to be unmindful of the obligations to his slaves on his part. They say to him, "Masters, give unto your slaves that which is just and equal. Do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is there any respect of persons with him!" They say to him, *You* are responsible as well as your slaves; and as you would enjoy the favour of your Judge, honour his religion, and find mercy at that day, be ye merciful as your father in heaven is merciful. Your slaves are not *things*, but *persons*; they are not *brutes*, but *men*; they are not *your* creatures, but *God's*; they are not *your* property, but *his* who "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell upon the face of the earth, if haply they might feel after him and find him."

Thus do the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament treat the subject of slavery. They sanction no other slavery than this. The exclusive title of man over a fellow-worm, who belongs not to him, but to God; the assertion of any human will as supreme over a fellow-creature, when there is no supreme will in heaven or on earth, but the divine will; the lording it over the conscience of the slave, when God alone is Lord of the conscience; this they rebuke and indignantly condemn. Whatever servitude denies the slave the rights of his moral nature, annihilates his capacity of improvement, crushes intellect that would otherwise brighten and expand, subdues affections that would otherwise be elevated to the spirit of heaven,

shuts out the light of truth, and binds body and soul in the chains of ignorance and death; they denounce as one of the things which the Lord hateth. But a slavery that is dissevered from all these evils, and dissociated from the abuses to which it is so exposed from the corrupt propensities and selfish passions of men, it no where, to my knowledge, forbids. Such a slavery, for example, as Onesimus sustained to Philemon, a state of Christian servitude, a state in which the master and the slave were required to conduct themselves as brethren and heirs of the common faith and salvation, Paul certainly did not forbid, when he restored this fugitive slave to his master. So far from justifying him for absconding, he required him to go back, at the same time furnishing him with a letter of introduction to his master, entreating him to overlook his fault, and regard him as a penitent and faithful servant, and "brother beloved."

I hold myself ready to revise these views, whenever I see evidence from the Bible that they are not true. Nothing is more plain to my mind than that the word of God recognizes the relation between master and slave as one of the established institutions of the age; and that while it addresses slaves as Christian men, and Christian men as slaveholders, it so modifies the whole system of slavery, as to give a death blow to all its abuses, and breathes such a spirit, that in the same proportion in which its principles are imbibed, the yoke of bondage will melt away, all its abuses cease, and every form of human oppression will be unknown. The Bible is no agitator. It gradually meliorates what it cannot suddenly remove. Instead of carrying fire and sword throughout the world without the least prospect of advantage, it aims at making men holy and fitting them for heaven. It changes human governments only as it changes the human character; and thus produces all those alterations which commend themselves to a mind enlightened by the truth and Spirit of God. It aims at transforming the world; but it is by transforming the dispositions and hearts of men, and diffusing throughout all the social institutions, the supreme love of God, and the impartial love of man.

Let us now take a brief view of the practical effect of these

general principles, as they have actually been applied by several Christian States. European civilization may be said to have commenced from the fall of the Roman empire. To say nothing of antecedent periods, from this time, the Bible, though often in the hands of a corrupted hierarchy, has been exerting a powerful influence on all the social institutions. Barbarism gradually subsided into feudalism, and feudalism gave way to the various modifications of civil liberty. Slavery was among the last of the evils, so imbedded in the constitution of human society, to which the Bible extended its influence. "Mr. Barrington, who has given a very strong picture of the degradation and oppression of the tenants under the English tenure of pure villanage, is of opinion that feudal servitude existed in England so late as the reign of Elizabeth."[1] But the personal servitude which grew out of the abuses of the feudal system was a much milder form of slavery than that which existed among the ancients. "No person in England was a villain in the eye of the law, except in relation to his master. To all other persons he was a freeman, and as against them he had rights of property; and his master for excessive injuries committed upon the vassal was answerable at the king's suit."[2] The importation of negro slaves into the Spanish colonies had commenced as early as 1501; and in 1517, the emperor Charles V granted a patent to certain persons to supply the Spanish islands with slaves from Africa. But this enterprise was opposed with great spirit and vigour by some of the Christians of Spain, who had great influence in mitigating slavery in the colonies. The first Englishman who introduced the practice of buying or kidnapping negroes in Africa, and transporting and selling them for slaves in the West Indies, was Sir John Hawkins, an English admiral born at Plymouth, and who signalized himself under Elizabeth, especially against the invincible armada. It is matter for lamentation that having signalized himself in so good a cause, he should have become signal in a cause which loads his name with everlasting reproach. This was in the year 1562. From that time to the year 1808, the British West Indies became the great receptacle

[1] Kent's Commentaries, vol. ii. [2] Ibid.

of these unhappy beings. "In 1620, a Dutch vessel carried a cargo of slaves from Africa to Virginia; and this was the sad epoch of the introduction of African slaves into the English colonies on this continent. The Dutch records of New Netherlands allude to the existence of slaves in their settlements on the Hudson, as early as 1626; and slavery is mentioned in the Massachusetts laws, between 1630 and 1641." [1]

Thus, for well nigh three successive centuries, the negro race remained almost without an advocate—crushed, broken, and deserted, and the objects of a cupidity which it would seem nothing could satiate. England, deeply stained with the guilt of this foul traffic, at length stands foremost for the relief and elevation of the African race, unless we except the government and people of Massachusetts, who, in 1645-'46, so boldly protested against the introduction of African slaves into the colony as a heinous crime.[2] At the commencement of that distinguished era which was introduced about half a century ago, when the missionary spirit began to agitate the Christian world; when the judgments of heaven began to descend on the nations which had "given their power and strength to the beast;" when the cause of evangelical truth was revived, and the Spirit of God began to descend in that series of revivals of religion which has not ceased to the present hour; a movement was begun in Britain, by which Christianity and civilization were conveyed to long-neglected and abused Africa. Clarkson, Sharpe, Wilberforce, Thornton, and Gregorie, became the undaunted and unwearied advocates for the abolition of the slave trade throughout the civilized world, and the enquiry was every where agitated, whether it were not practicable to wipe away this deep stain from Christian lands. About the same time, the establishment of the colony of Sierra-Leone, and the fearful revolution in St. Domingo, gave additional impulse to the enterprise, and awakened the hope that the day of Africa's deliverance was near. "God Almighty has set before me," said Wilberforce, "two great objects, the suppression of the slave trade, and the reformation of manners." After some few unsuccessful struggles,

[1] Kent's Commentaries. [2] Winthorp's and Bancroft's Histories, as referred to by Chancellor Kent.

the celebrated Mr. Pitt was enlisted in this cause, and Mr. Fox concluded the last speech he ever made in parliament with the immortal resolution for the abolition of the slave trade.[1] In the mean time, such men as Sir Samuel Romily and Sir James Macintosh, aided by venerable prelates, threw the vigour of their minds and the ardour of their hearts into the benevolent struggle, and Edmund Burke had exclaimed, "This is not a traffic in the labour of man, but in the man himself!" In March, 1807, the bill for abolition was passed. After the general peace in Europe, in 1814, the subject was again brought before parliament for the purpose of securing the co-operation of the other Christian powers in the suppression of this nefarious traffic. In 1823, the house of commons unanimously adopted a series of resolutions with the ultimate view of emancipating all slavés within the British dominions. The parliament of Great Britain had peculiar facilities for doing this. It had unlimited power. The slaves were not a constituent part of their own population, but in remote and feeble islands, having no voice in the government at home, and whom a few ships of the line could awe into obedience. In 1826, the same resolutions were adopted unanimously by the house of lords. A little before this, Mr. Buxton and Mr. Canning had introduced the resolutions for the more lenient treatment of the slaves, especially as regards religious instruction and their social condition. And, in 1833, a more decisive course of action was adopted; and the memorable bill passed, which, at an expense of £20,000,000, as an equitable consideration to the planters for the slaves, resolved on the entire abolition of slavery throughout the British colonies.

But, as we have already seen, Great Britain, in opposition to repeated expostulation and strong remonstrance from such men as Franklin, Adams, and Hancock, had extended the evils of slavery, and diffused this malignant plague throughout lands to which the omnipotence of her parliament could no longer be extended. Though long since abolished in New England, slavery was introduced into that country soon after its settlement. But it was in a form modified and mitigated

[1] See Croly's Life of George IV.

by the spirit and principles of the Bible. While the cupidity of New England had done much to replenish the slave market of the south, the institutions of the Mosaic law were professedly the model of her own slavery. It was early enacted in the Massachusetts colony, that "all slaves shall have the liberties and Christian usage which the law of God established in Israel concerning such persons doth morally require." The law in the State of Connecticut is thus expressed by judge Reeve, in his law of baron and femme. "Slavery here was very far from being of the absolute and rigid kind. The master had no control over the life of his slave. If he killed him, he was liable to the same punishment as if he killed a freeman. He was as liable to be sued by the slave in an action for beating, or wounding, or for immoderate chastisement, as he would be if he had thus treated an apprentice. A slave was capable of holding property in character of a devisee, or legatee. If the master should take away such property, his slave would be entitled to an action against him. Slaves had the same right of life and property as apprentices; and the difference between them was this,—an apprentice is a servant for a time, and a slave is a servant for life."

And where the Bible has begun to exert this influence, it does more. It gradually remedies the evil, and wears it away. It did in Massachusetts, and slavery was abolished by their constitution. It did in Connecticut, and statutes were passed in 1783 and 1797, which have in their gentle and gradual operation, totally extinguished slavery in that State. It did in New Jersey by an act of the legislature in 1784. It did in Pennsylvania, by a similar act in 1780. In New York, for a long series of years, the Bible appears to have exerted little influence in mitigating the condition of the slave. "The master and mistress were authorized to punish their slaves at discretion, not extending to life or limb, and each town was authorized to appoint a common whipper for their slaves, to whom a salary was to be allowed. In the year 1740, it was observed by the legislature, that all due encouragement ought to be given to the direct importation of slaves, and all smuggling of slaves condemned, as an eminent discouragement to the fair trader!"

The criminal code against them was fearfully severe. When capitally impeached, they were often tried out of the ordinary course of justice, and denied the rights and privileges of free subjects under right accusations. They were convicted on suspicion and on testimony that would have been rejected by any court where a white man was the accused person. In 1741 on the discovery of what was called the "negro plot," thirteen were adjudged to the stake in our own city.[1] The last execution of this kind was witnessed at Poughkeepsie shortly before the commencement of the revolutionary war.[2] But this severity could not long be sustained in a Christian land. In process of time the penal code against slaves was meliorated; facilities were multiplied for the manumission of slaves; and the importation of slaves was at length prohibited. Laws were enacted also to teach the slaves to read, and a system commenced for the gradual abolition of slavery. Till at length, by the act of the 31st of March, 1817, it was declared that every subject of the State, from and after the 4th day of July, 1827, shall be free. And now tell me, where except in Christian lands can any such history of slavery be found as this? Is it not true that the Bible has silently and gradually ameliorated the relation between the master and the slave, that in the progress of its principles and spirit, it must ultimately either abolish this relation, or leave it on a basis of the purest benevolence!

I am pained to say, that slavery in no very mitigated form still exists in these United States. There are Christian masters to whom the evils and abuses of slavery are unknown. Nor are they few. And yet there are abuses in this system which it is high time were eradicated. I speak not now of those physical evils to which these our suffering fellow-men are subjected, but of the domestic wrongs, the intellectual ignorance, and moral debasement to which they are doomed. The slave population of the south are by law forbidden to read; they may not unlock the treasures of human and divine knowledge. This cannot be right. This must be an offence in the sight of God. Christian men at the south, high-minded and honourable men should adopt early measures to remove this

[1] Smith's History of New York. [2] Kent's Commentaries.

evil. They scarcely know how such a policy appears to impartial minds of all lands. The condition of slaves in the southern States is described by chancellor Kent, to be "more analogous to that of the slaves of the ancients, than to that of the villains of feudal times, both in respect to the degradation of the slaves, and the full dominion and power of the master. The statute regulations with regard to slaves follow the principles of the civil law, and are extremely severe, but the master has no power over life or limb; and the severe letter of their laws is softened and corrected by the humanity of the age, and the spirit of Christianity." This is a sufficiently melancholy picture from such a pen. We lament it; we deeply lament it before God and the world. Nor is this the worst. It is estimated in a recent and important work on the slave trade, by Mr. Buxton, of the English parliament, that not less than one thousand negroes are, even at this late period of the world, every day torn from their homes in Africa, by the horrible cupidity of their fellow-men.

And how shall the evil be remedied? Just as the Bible and all sound experience tell us it has been remedied;—through the influence of the Gospel, by the power of Christian truth, by the meekness and gentleness of Christian men. Grossness, calumny, obstinacy, and fury are not the remedy. Angry passions and bitter invective are not the remedy. Strife and ill will, acrimonious discussions and sanguinary war are not the remedy. These will throw a thousand obstacles in your path, and involve you in endless difficulties, and create needless enemies and opposition. Who does not see that it has done so already? and that in Virginia, in Kentucky, in Maryland, and in the District of Columbia, a very sensible and inauspicious change has taken place within a very few years in the sentiments of the public in relation to slavery? The late Dr. Griffin, one of the most devoted friends of the coloured race in this land, said to me a few months before his death, "I do not see that the efforts in favour of immediate emancipation have effected any thing but to rivet the chains of the poor slave." Is not this a lamentable fact? Deeply as this evil was laid in the foundations of our country, it has already disappeared in

many portions of it, driven away by the spirit of the Gospel and of liberty; and if we are to expect its entire banishment, we must look for it in the operation of the same gentle, yet not less effectual causes which have hitherto lightened the sorrows of the captive, and led the north to free herself from this stain. We would remedy the evil by the light of truth, by the ardour of love, by the soft mercies that distil from the olive branch of peace, by the balm of Gilead. The recklessness of dissension, the disunion of our body politic, and its consequent horrors will be disastrous both to the master and the slave. Desperate haste and inconsiderate heedlessness will but defeat their object. And where do we find the authority and encouragement to such a course? In the wishes, but not in the judgment; in the unthinking, and I fear at times designing fanaticism of a few modern reformers, but not in past experience; not in calm, foreseeing benevolence; and above all, we find it not in the word of God. Believe me, my young friends, there is a more excellent way. You may shut out the light of truth from the master and the slave; you may give birth to unsleeping jealousies and bitter animosity which a century cannot assuage; you may divide the land which is otherwise destined to be the glory of the church and the world; and you will have only bound faster the chains which would have relaxed and fallen off, and have paralysed the hands of Ethiopia just as she was "stretching them out unto God." Hesitate then, ere you throw yourselves into a stream, which, as passion and bitter animosity shall swell its current, will launch you on an ocean of dissension and civil strife. Pause, ere you put your hands to a mighty engine, which, when in motion, you will have no power to guide or restrain—perhaps an engine of destruction, the effects of which may be felt through coming centuries, crushing the dearest interests of yourselves and your posterity. And while you pause, will you not listen to the dictates of an unbiassed judgment; to the best and most enlightened feelings of your hearts; will you not consult that Book which, while it refrains from rudely interfering with the existing institutions of society, is destined, by the mild diffusions of its light and influence, to banish the evils of slavery from the world.

LECTURE IX.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE ON THE EXTENT AND CERTAINTY OF MORAL SCIENCE.

THAT which gives value and excellency to the religion of the Bible is its truth—its undeniable, undoubted truth. Our belief of it does not make it true, nor does our unbelief of it make it false. The great Author of our nature has so constituted the mind, that where its moral bias is not corrupted and perverted, there is nothing it more delights in than truth. Even in the meaner and less useful sciences, it has no such luxury as in the pursuit of truth. It is narrated of Archimedes, the celebrated mathematician of Syracuse, that during the war which raged between Hiero and the Romans, he was not diverted from his contemplations even by the sacking of his native city, but was killed by a common soldier, while he was in the very act of meditating a mathematical theorem. I doubt not that you have often sympathized with the solicitude of this philosopher, and in some degree at least participated in his ecstacy, in that intense pleasure which you have, almost insensibly as it were, derived from the pursuit and acquisition of truth. The thirsty clod, or drooping flower, is not more really refreshed, when it drinks the long-wished-for rain, than the eager and panting mind is refreshed and rejoices as she drinks her fill at some pure fountain of knowledge. It were grateful to know, did the acquisition only exalt and expand the mind; but it is still more grateful when we recollect that truth opens so many other sources of enjoyment—enjoyment that is valuable because it is pure and enduring, that never palls on the intellectual appetite, and which, the oftener it is repeated, is the more sure to be repeated without satiety.

It is not every man who has the opportunity of augmenting

these sources of enjoyment. Nature perhaps has denied him the talents, or the providence of God has withheld from him the means of extensive intellectual acquisition. And therefore his mind is narrow, his faculties are degraded, his taste for pleasure is uncultivated and coarse, and he is too apt to be dependent upon the gratifications of sense. Especially have these remarks force, as they relate to the various branches of moral science. Men may be ignorant in very many departments of human knowledge with comparative impunity; but there are subjects of intellectual research in which every man, without distinction of rank and condition, has a deep and everlasting interest. A being who is the creature of account, and destined to immortality, whatever else he may forego, may not be ignorant of moral and religious truth.

We have seen in the progress of these lectures, that the world is not a little indebted to the Bible for its advancement in various departments of human knowledge. But we should have very inadequate impressions of what we owe to this sacred volume, did we limit them by the information it communicates in the departments of human knowledge merely. The knowledge which most deeply interests us is that which relates to the destinies of man as the creature of God and the heir of immortality. Other knowledge has principal reference to the present world, and terminates with the present life; this refers to the soul, and is lasting as eternity.

We are scarcely aware how little the world knows, or ever has known of religious truth, for which it is not altogether indebted to this sacred Book. We cannot indeed form any distinct and just conception of the intellectual condition of our race, had the light of a supernatural revelation never shone upon our doubt and darkness. The present actual condition of those portions of the human family who are destitute of the Scriptures, degraded and dark as they are, does not furnish a faithful development of the still deeper and more profound darkness which would have rested on them, had the light of heavenly truth, instead of having been once enjoyed, and subsequently extinguished, never shone upon them. The design of this lecture therefore, is to mark as clearly as we can in the

compass of a single exercise, the influence of the Bible upon the researches and certainty of moral science.

It has been customary with a certain class of men to represent in glowing colours the powers of human reason; to eulogize and almost deify the intellectual faculties of man, and to give them so high a place as to dispense with the light of a supernatural revelation. Not a little has been said, and much better than we can say it, to dispel this illusion. Moral and religious truth is a field which the lights of reason have never explored, and unaided can never explore. Under the direction of perfectly sanctified affections, she might indeed have been a safe and sure guide, so far as her limited powers could extend. Unfallen, she might discover the expressive indications of her Maker's will and glory in his works and providence, and every where read his truth, "clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." But the "gold has become dim, and the most fine gold can be changed." Her once eagle eye is darkened and benighted. This once lofty intelligence is fallen, its vision dimmed, and its faculties weakened and perverted. I do not know a more fruitful source of error than confidence in the undirected, and therefore misdirected powers of the human mind in its enquiries after religious truth. It is the Πρωτον ψευδος, the radical error of all false religions, and of every deviation from the true. It would seem that rationalists have forgotten or are unwilling to acknowledge the extent of man's apostacy. They have exalted the powers of human reason to an elevation known only to unfallen humanity, and have paid a reverence to its dictates which belongs only to the infinite and unerring Intelligence. I do not hesitate to say, that the man who does not construct his theory of moral science upon the broad basis of human apostacy, and who is not deeply sensible that, at every step of his progress, he has to contend not only with a depraved heart and an erring conscience, but also with an understanding that is darkened and defiled, is sure to construct one that is visionary and wild. It is lamentable, that the age of extravagant encomium upon the intellectual powers of man has not ceased. Who, in a Christian audience is not weary of these misplaced and ill-timed commendations? What

have the boasted powers of reason, unaided and unillumined by light from heaven, ever achieved? Where are their splendid victories over the empire of darkness? What are the conclusions to which they have arrived, the results which they have adopted and defend? After following them through all the intricacies and darkness of their labyrinths, into what world of light do they conduct us?

We cannot answer these enquiries without taking a passing glance at some of the leading religious principles of pagan philosophers and more modern deists, and showing their utter insufficiency to answer the great ends of religion. Of the former we may truly say, that it is painful and even disgusting to contemplate the ignorance of the most celebrated of their number on almost all moral and religious subjects. Their endless differences and inconsistencies upon topics which they conceived to be of the highest importance, were such that one would think it impossible for themselves even to have any confidence in their own speculations. Such too was the immorality of their doctrines, that wherever they were believed they could not fail to exert a pernicious influence upon the opinions and practices of men. Some believed in the existence of a God; others did not. Some were unitarians; others were polytheists. Every country had its deities which differed from all others:—some in the heavens—some in the air—some in the ocean—some in the infernal regions—while some were deified heroes and men. Every thing about their religion was dark, confused, and imperfect. As we have already seen, they were the grossest idolaters, and their religious rites were distinguished by all that is impure and cruel. They were utterly ignorant of any method of salvation, as well as any effectual means for the attainment of holiness. They had no definite notions of the end for which man was created, or of that in which his highest happiness consists. Of the resurrection of the body, they knew nothing, and were in a state of painful suspense concerning the immortality of the soul. They spoke of Elysium and Tartarus, but these were poetical fancies rather than any just conception of the doctrine of rewards and punishments. The insufficiency of their religion is every where proved

from its defective discoveries of the being and character of the only true God; from the absurdities of their worship; from their ignorance of the true sources of human enjoyment; from their imperfect rules of duty, and ineffectual motives to obedience; from their utter darkness on the great subject of pardon for the guilty, and the utter powerlessness of their systems to arrest and subdue the power of moral corruption.[1]

And what more has reason done for the pagans of modern than for those of ancient times? Pass through heathen lands; visit the savage tribes of Africa and our own continent; travel over Hindostan and China; and you will see how little unaided reason can effect in discovering a system of religious truth. Sorcery, divination, and magic; the transmigration of souls into animals and vegetables after death; endless superstitions and gross darkness are the acknowledged characteristics of their religion. There is indeed an imposing mythology; there is the grandeur of temples, the decoration of altars and priests and idols; there is the pomp of their ritual and the gayety of their festivals; while the awful tragedy is distinguished by nothing more certainly than the wild and wanton dance; the sanguinary procession, and the bones of men offered to their idol deities bleaching under the arid sky.

If you ascend somewhat higher than these degradations of paganism, and enquire what reason has achieved among deistical philosophers, what do you find but systems of materialism and irresponsibility—a world uncaused and ungoverned—a deity who is neither wise nor good—conceptions that are obscure and unsatisfying—and systems of dark uncertainty and unhinging scepticism that agitate without convincing the mind? Deism, it is to be hoped, has seen its best days. From the early part of the seventeenth century, when a few men in France and Italy began to form themselves into a society for the purpose of propagating the doctrines of pure Theism in opposition to Christianity, down to the latter part of the eighteenth

[1] See these positions illustrated at length in 'Halyburton's Enquiry.' The ablest dissertation I have met with on this general topic is from the pen of the late Dr. John M. Mason, entitled, 'Hints on the insufficiency of the light of nature.' Vol. iii, p. 405.

century, when so many distinguished minds, both on the continent of Europe and in Great Britain, rejected the Gospel under a pretence of veneration for the One true God, human reason made its best and probably its last efforts in favour of natural religion. And yet nothing more clearly distinguishes this system than that it professes to be no system. It acknowledges the existence of a God; professes to follow the light and law of nature, and rejects all divine revelation. With this standard it seemed for a while to be marching through the world, and because it quieted the minds of men in sin, multiplied its converts without enquiry and without conviction. But it was destined to overthrow itself. It was never any thing better than a refined sort of paganism. Nor had it indeed half the conscience or half the stability of paganism itself. At first it was pure Theism, or natural religion; then it became bold infidelity; then materialism; then scepticism; then it denied a providence, and then a God. Reason became its deity: there was no God but Reason. And now, for the first time elevated to the throne of the universe, reason began to be alarmed for her own safety, and resolved that there was a God. And then she began to tread her way back to the Bible. There, and there only does she discover the God whom the understanding delights in, and at whose authority conscience bows. It is a remark worthy of being remembered, that "however deists may deride and scoff at the Bible, it is a fact capable of the clearest proof that, had it not been for the Scriptures, there would not at this time be such a thing as pure Theism upon earth. There is not now in the world an individual who believes in one infinitely perfect God, whose knowledge of this truth may not be traced directly or indirectly to the Bible.[1]

There is another fact, which is enough to wean our confidence from the more arrogant claims of human reason; I mean its utter failure in the great department of intellectual philosophy. Employing, as this department has done, some of the most erudite and powerful minds, its whole history has furnished melancholy indications of the blindness and uncertainty of that dependence which men have placed in their own intel-

[1] Evidences of Christianity, by A. Alexander, D.D.

lectual powers. Though giant minds have grappled with the theme with all their freshness and vigour, what has been more fluctuating than the principles of this science from the days of the schoolmen down to the time of Reid, Stewart, and Brown? Who now confides in the visionary system of Malbranche; in the notions of Locke with respect to the origin of our ideas; or in the idealism of Berkley and Collier? Who believes in the annihilation both of the world of matter and of mind, as advocated by Hume; in the monads of Leibnitz; in the vibrations and associations of Hartley; in the negations of Kant; or in the transcendentalism of Coleridge and Cousin? And yet which of these systems has not, in its turn, been extolled as the sublimest effort of human genius, and sharing honour with the most important improvements in human knowledge? Aside from the few principles of intellectual philosophy which are obviously deducible from the Scriptures, what evidence have we that a single half century will not witness an entire revolution in this important science? How little confidence then is to be placed in the vaunted powers of human reason? If she has learned so little in the science of mind, how much less will she learn in the science of religion? If her fairest systems of mental philosophy are so undermined and changing, what can she accomplish in framing and building up a fair and stable system of moral and religious truth!

It is no difficult matter, therefore, to discover the appropriate influence of the Bible upon the researches and certainty of moral science. It is just the influence that is needed. It is paramount to every other; is extensive as the wants of the soul and the sphere of religious truth; is perfect and can receive no accessions. It illumines where men are ignorant, and decides and establishes where reason hesitates and our minds are in doubt and uncertainty. Let us contemplate it a single moment in these two aspects.

In the first place it extends the sphere of moral science. It reveals all truth. It keeps back nothing that is best for a fallen creature to know. An intelligent child of six years of age, educated in the bosom of a Christian family, knows more on moral and religious subjects than Socrates or Plato. We are

scarcely aware of the vast extent and compass of religious truth with which the Scriptures are so perfectly familiar. We listen to their instructions so frequently, that the thought is not always present to our minds that they are inculcating truths which none but God knows. They point us back to the eternity which the Creator inhabited before the foundation of the world, and forward to the eternity we shall inhabit after this world shall have passed away. They lead our minds up to Him who, though he dwells in light unapproachable and fills the universe, is about our path and about our bed; on whom all beings depend from the archangel to the worm; and who, while he is slow to anger and of great kindness, is terrible in majesty. They make us acquainted with his vast and perfect purposes, comprehending all his works and all the events of his providence in this world and other worlds, in time and through interminable ages. They direct our thoughts to the great law which he has published, and by which he establishes the moral order and harmony of the universe. They lead us to take a view of that world of wonders—man—a mystery to himself, and yet more than all the works of God, the means of eliciting the manifold glory of his Maker. They proclaim to us the glad tidings of great joy through the incarnation and death, resurrection, intercession, and mediatorial reign and triumph of the Son of God. They make us acquainted with the character and offices of the Divine Spirit, under whose transforming influence the soul is brought out of darkness into marvellous light, and though by nature guilty and impoverished, is enriched and adorned, and made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance with the saints in light. They make us familiar with the import of momentous and melancholy themes—death and the grave; with the resurrection both of the just and the unjust. They pour a light upon our path by which we descry the vast continent, the boundless immortality that stretches away, immeasurably beyond our thoughts, and then lift the curtain where scenes and prospects rise that alternately appal and enchant us—the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven—the throne of judgment—the final sentence—the everlasting retribution. How long would human reason have been

clouded in mist, how long groped in darkness, had not the light dawned that has made such disclosures? He who knows all things, and sees as clearly at midnight as at noon-day, not only becomes the light of reason, but even condescends to reveal to faith what our limited and imperfect reason may not in many instances comprehend. His intelligence is everlasting; he is the centre of thought, the law of all laws, and the last and supreme reason of all things. It belongs to him to originate and reveal the truths we are to receive; and even though they may not be comprehended by us, yet are they all clear and plain to him. Let the man who thirsts for knowledge, who is wearied in his pursuit of truth, and who feels dissatisfied with all that reason has ever taught him, repair to the Scriptures and see how fast he will learn under such a teacher. What amazing resources does he possess when he becomes the possessor of the Bible! What an ocean of knowledge does he carry in the hollow of his hand when he grasps that sacred book! What uncreated wisdom seems then to be contained within the limits of his finite intelligence! When once a mind eager in the pursuit of knowledge begins in earnest to learn from this book of God, it continually advances. There are no limits to these exhaustless instructions. As the intellectual powers and faculties expand and brighten by thought and prayer, as sinister and unworthy ends are lost sight of and superseded by the more steady and unalloyed love of the truth, the sphere of vision is enlarged—one degree of attainment facilitates the acquisition of another—the more is known, the greater will be the capacity of knowledge, till light is poured upon the hitherto benighted mind from every opened page, and it increases in the knowledge of God till it beholds him as he is.

But the Scriptures do not merely extend the limits of moral science. In the second place, they fix its certainty. They reveal nothing as the object of conjecture, but every thing as of absolute knowledge. The truths they disclose are not matters of opinion; they are facts, facts ascertained by the God only wise, and the reality of which depends on his veracity speaking in his word. There is no foundation in the nature

of things, for uncertainty in moral rather than in natural or mathematical science. Every thing which men perceive, and about which they think and reason, is either certainly true or certainly false. Independently of all our views and the views of others, distinct from all the notions we derive from custom and education, irrespective of all our caprice, prejudice, and ignorance, there is such a thing as religious truth. There is in the nature of the case no ground for doubt and uncertainty. —Though not decided by the same kind of evidence by which we resolve an equation, or demonstrate a theorem, or determine the nature and causes of disease, it is not on that account the less certain. Where infinite intelligence and integrity bear witness, there can be no room for uncertainty. All farther enquiry is out of place. One declaration of the God of truth is paramount to all the philosophical theories, and all the opposing systems of faith the world ever beheld. It is amusing to hear some modern religionists talk about a more rational religion than the religion of the Bible! What can be more rational than the wisdom of God? "Who hath been his counsellor, and who hath instructed him?" A suffering but godly man was once asked if he could see any reason for the dispensation which caused him so much agony. "No;" replied he, "but I am as well satisfied as if I could see ten thousand. God's will is the very perfection of all reason." So of the revelations of his truth. They are the perfection of all reason. The reason that is opposed to them is not reason but folly. We need not be surprised therefore, that the Scriptures claim for themselves certain knowledge; for how can it be otherwise, since they come from God? Nor should it be any matter of surprise to us that those who truly receive the Bible should regard it as an unerring standard, and be established in its truths. "Lord, to whom shall we go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou [illegible]at Christ, the Son of the living God!" Men who lo[illegible]e Bible, know that it is true. They have not merely [illegible]ed to bow their understanding to the decisions of infinite wisdom, but they have felt its power. Its truths accord with their own experience. They perceive their excellence and beauty.

They have felt them; they have handled them; they have tasted and enjoyed them; and those wants of the soul which have so long been mocked, and deluded, and unrelieved, have found in them that satisfaction and peace which have elsewhere been sought in vain. "Do not wonder," says the devout Pascal, "to see some unsophisticated people believe without reasoning, God inclines their hearts to believe. They judge by the heart, as others do by the understanding. The holy Scriptures is not a science of the understanding, but of the heart. It is intelligible only to those who have an honest and good heart. Charity is not only the end of the holy Scriptures but the entrance to them." Men who are born of God, are begotten through the truths of the Bible; they are, as it were, born into them, and they form the aliment of their spiritual being. They have had access to the tree once guarded by flaming cherubim; they have plucked its fruit, have breathed its fragrance and perfume, and know indeed that it is the tree of life.

Nor is it a consideration of little moment, that the Scriptures fix the certainty of religious truth. Few principles are of higher importance than that truth, so far as it is attained, can be known with certainty. It is one thing to be on the whole persuaded and another to be assured. It is one thing to view a proposition undulating between the different gradations of probability, and established only by the preponderance of probabilities; and another to consider truth beyond the influence of a doubt. If, after patient investigation, there were few subjects but may be unsettled by a corrupt philosophy; if, after a laborious, impartial, and prayerful study of the Scriptures, it were impossible to arrive at any other conclusion than conjecture, we might well feel ourselves involved in "an horror of great darkness." I cannot easily conceive of a more painful state of mind. Perhaps, indeed, there is no feeling in the human bosom so distressing as suspense and uncertainty, be the subject what it may. Man needs firm ground whereon to place his feet, and not the marsh or quicksand, that trembles beneath him. He has a singular power to brace his courage to a level with his condition, and to endure with fortitude those evils which, before their arrival, seemed almost insupportable. But

a state of hesitation between hopes and fears is, if possible, more tormenting than the fulfilment of his worst apprehensions. The haunting fear, the agony of suspense, prostrate his energy; and to escape these he often leaps to grapple with the dread realities. Where then can there be imagined a more dreadful state of mind than one of uncertainty as to the most important and vital moral subjects? Is there such a being as God? Is there a future state of immortal existence? Is there pardon for the guilty? At what rate shall we estimate the misery of the mind that ponders upon these momentous questions with doubt and uncertainty? To hang over the deep current into which generations have sunk, while the eye finds nothing but darkness, nor even a ripple which shows the spot where they disappeared; to lean over the abyss to see whether perhaps it might discover some faint outline of the world beneath; whether some gloomy echo, or some response of joy, some sound of mourning, or some song of praise, shall tell the dreadful mystery; what indescribable anxiety is this! But not thus is it with men who have the Bible. From these unerring pages speaks a voice that is echoed back from every bosom of the living, every tomb and monument of the dead. If every thing were conjecture elsewhere, here every thing is certainty. We know now the value and the true business of life. And if we are misled and perplexed by the shadows of uncertainty, it is because we "love darkness," and prefer to trace our dubious, hesitating course, under the dim torchlight of reason, to being led by that book which eternal wisdom has revealed to be a "light to our feet and a lamp to our path."

But you will ask me, has human reason no place in the pursuits of moral science? She has a definite and definable place. It is her province to ascertain that there is a God, and that he is a being of infinite power, knowledge, and rectitude. It is her province to ascertain that he is able to make a revelation of his will to men, and with such evidence of its reality that she can believe and know that it comes from him. It is her province to enquire and judge whether the persons who speak in his name were truly sent by him, and to become assured that what they have spoken and written is in sober

verity his own word. It is her province to look at the difficulties, and weigh well all the objections, to the plenary inspiration of the sacred volume; and to be the more severe in her scrutiny because this volume claims to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Nor does her province terminate here. While it belongs not to her to erect herself into a tribunal before which the truth of God must appear to be judged, it at the same time belongs to her to enquire and ascertain what this divinely inspired book contains. This she must do diligently, humbly, and with becoming meekness. Having ascertained that this is the book of God, she may task all her powers and all her learning, and what is more, all her fairness and candour, to ascertain the true sense and import of the sacred writers. Her views of religious truth she must draw directly from the Scriptures. She is not merely to call in the aid of the Bible in confirmation of her own opinions, but to begin her investigations with this divine source of knowledge. The evidence of the truth she receives is the divine testimony, and she has nothing to do but ascertain and receive it. She may not interfere, nor hesitate, where the God of truth has decided. Her business is to stand a silent enquirer at the shrine of these Oracles, and there hear what God the Lord hath spoken. Her object is to get at *their* philosophy, and not her own. She must take leave of her lofty independence and dignity, if she would learn of Christ. Her philosophical speculations have nothing to do in ascertaining the meaning of the Scriptures. Nor can we give too great emphasis to this thought. Men are very apt, where they have any fixed views of the laws which regulate mind, to look at God's truth through the medium of their own philosophy. If for example, God declares that the human race are sinners from their birth, they hesitate at such a statement, because according to their received opinions, the infantile mind is not capable of sin. If God declares that the moral renovation of men is effected by his own mighty power, they call in question this decision, because, according to their philosophy, the mind is an existence which is incapable of being acted upon except by light motives. Instead of allowing the Bible to influence their philosophy,

they allow their philosophy to become the arbitrary interpreter of the Bible. Instead of submitting their judgments to the decisions of the uncreated intelligence they require that his intelligence should be subordinate to their own. There are few Christian divines that have not to some extent fallen into this error. This was eminently the error of Origen, of Coccoius, of Hutchinson, and of Swedenborg. This is the error of the Pelagians and Arminians of ancient and modern times. This is the error also to some extent of the Calvinistic and Hopkinsian schools. Nay, this is the error of most of us, heterodox and orthodox. Strange to say, we cannot forbear inweaving the shreds of our own philosophy with the wisdom of God. We do it insensibly. But human reason was never given to man for such a purpose. When she has ascertained the true import of God's revelation, her work is done. To attempt more than this is rebellion against God—nay it is rebellion against herself; for reason decides, and decides intuitively, that "if we believe the testimony of man, the testimony of God is greater." It has been well remarked, that "periods in which the pride of philosophy has been most exalted have often been distinguished for the widest departures from the simplicity of Scriptural theology." Human reason is never so truly in her proper place as when she sits a learner at the feet of Christ. How can she soar on a loftier wing than when she flies so near the sun as to vail her face and lose her vision in the brightness of his rays? It is not reason that guides the soul then, but God. It is a heavenly light—a guide from a purer and more intellectual world. It is reason, but not her own—a reason that never hesitates, never toils, and never becomes weary; a reason that is never prejudiced, partial, or benighted, and that never errs.

We think it therefore no small commendation of the Bible, that it is the only book that has opened to the world the extended field of moral science, and so marked and limited the [illegible] of human enquiry, that if the mind wanders, it can never be said that it is for want of light. Few truths come to us with such overpowering evidence as the truths of the Bible. The cheerless gloom which broods over the understandings of

men had never been chased away, but for the beams of this supernatural revelation. Men may look with an unfriendly eye on that system of truth which reproves and condemns them; while they little know the loss the world would sustain by subverting its foundation. We have tried paganism; we have tried Mahometanism; we have tried deism and philosophy; and "we cannot look upon them even with respect." The Scriptures contain the only system of truth which is left us. If we give up these, we have no other to which we can repair. We must travel back under the faint and trembling lights of reason and nature, where "darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people." We must wander amid the regions of fancy and scepticism, where there is no argument to convince, and no oracle to decide. Every thing we see, and hear, and feel, becomes more and more the source of solicitude and apprehension, and the farther we extend our views, unless guided by this heavenly light, we behold only a vaster desert—a deeper abyss of doubt, darkness, and despair. Between reflections upon ourselves, and reflections upon God; between just views of his character and our own, we see no ground for hope. We are burdened with a sense of our sin, misery, and darkness. and long in vain for some quiet resting place—some covert from the tempest—some shadow of a great rock in this weary land—something which has "the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come." We strive to break our bondage, but every struggle binds us faster in our chains, and is only the ineffectual effort of a mind separated from God to restore by its own wisdom its lost fellowship with its Maker. We counsel you therefore to cleave to this unerring word of God. And we counsel you not to be satisfied with mere intellectual attainments. A mere intellectual acquaintance with the Bible is not godliness. They know too much of religion, far too much for their future comfort, who know more than they obey. We claim for the Bible and for the truth it inculcates, not only the submission, the admiration of your understanding, but the submission and admiration of your heart. Ah, my young friends, where else can you find a moment's repose, when you have once cast away your confidence in the in-

structions of God's word? Cast away this confidence, and there is a chasm before you which nothing can fill—an abyss, across which your dark, uncomforted minds throw their anxious glance, and feel that all their light and hopes are extinguished. You would wonder why you had been created with such insatiable desires after truth, such a thirst for the knowledge of God, and yet could find nothing to gratify them. Nor would this inquietude ever pass away until you had returned to the Bible. The sundered bond would then be made whole; the separating chasm filled; the darkness dissipated; the agitated, despairing mind at peace.

LECTURE X.

THE PRE-EMINENCE OF THE BIBLE IN PRODUCING HOLINESS AND TRUE RELIGION.

We have just turned our attention to the influence of the Bible upon the extent and certainty of moral science. We advance this evening a step beyond speculations like these, however momentous. We look at man not as the creature of intellect and thought merely, but as the creature of feeling, of moral sensibility and affection: and we look at the Bible not merely as exerting an influence upon his intellectual, but upon his active and moral powers, and forming the only character by which he becomes fitted for the presence and enjoyment of God his Maker. We here take our leave of those happy influences which this wonderful book exerts upon the learning and literature of the world; upon its laws and liberties; upon its social institutions and moral virtues, as well as upon the mere intellectual sphere of religious truth. And may I not hope that God will incline your hearts to accompany me with the same interest with which you have accompanied me thus far, though it be in enquiries more spiritual than those which have hitherto occupied our attention? If the things of time alone absorb our thoughts; if the present is that alone in which we feel an interest while we are heedless of the future; then do we ourselves present melancholy proof of that moral infatuation which has not yet learned to appreciate the holy Scriptures. What does it profit a man, though "he have all knowledge," and yet remain unacquainted with God? "What is he profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" It is THE CROWN AND GLORY OF THE BIBLE THAT IT IS THE ONLY MEANS OF HOLINESS AND TRUE RELIGION.

A moment's reflection upon the nature and destinies of the

human soul will teach us that moral rectitude alone can raise it to its true greatness. Were it possible for this great perfection to be detached from the character of God himself; were that divine nature, now so glorious, to be stripped of the "beauties of holiness;" instead of being revered and loved, he would be the object of suspicion and fear, and could no longer be contemplated but with terror and dismay. The higher a being is in intellectual power, the more debased is he, and the more were he to be dreaded were he destitute of holiness. Holiness constitutes the beauty, the amiableness, the loveliness of the intelligent nature, in whatever being, or whatever world it is found.

Man is not by nature the friend of God. He has no inherent moral dignity—no native innocence—no natural meetness for heaven. Under every form of human society, Pagan, Jewish, Mahometan, and Christian, all are by nature the slaves of sin. There was a judicial connection between the first offence of our progenitor and the sin and condemnation of his posterity. "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." It is a search too elevated for fallen men to acquaint themselves with God. There is no "contact of heart" between them and the great Father of spirits. No hours of leisure, no retirement of the closet, no silence of the dawn or evening witnesses their aspirations after the "first Fair and the first Good." "God is not in all their thoughts," but is excluded alike from their toil, their recreation, and their joys. Nay, even in the pensiveness and agony of their sorrows, how few are there who say, "Where is God my Maker, that giveth songs in the night?" How immense the distance, how deep the chasm between fallen man and the Holy One! The mind, the heart, the will, bound together by common bonds, acting and reacting upon one another by a thousand unseen and uncontrolled influences, all combined in the unhallowed, the treasonable revolt!

And how can such a being become holy? By what instrumentality is a creature thus apostate to be restored to the image of his Maker? By what agencies is he to be prepared for that world whose blessedness consists in deliverance from sin, and

in the perfect and everlasting enjoyment of its great Author and glory? What is the starting point, and what the impulse under which so degraded, benighted, depraved a being enters upon this new moral career? How shall he begin, in that growing transformation of character which in itself constitutes one of the chief elements of salvation, and one of the principal elements of the heaven where God dwells? Is it by the doctrines of human philosophy? Is it through the influence of good government? Is it by the power of false religion? Or is it only by the power of the Bible?

The view we have already taken of the pagan world shows nothing more clearly than that men have never become holy by the mere culture of the intellect. "Where is the wise? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" Nothing is more definitely asserted in the word of God, or more fully and abundantly illustrated in the history of man, than that "the world by wisdom knew not God." However the mind may be improved by culture, expanded and refined by science, and elevated by the moralizing influence which mere human agency may supply; there still remains a melancholy, nay, an invincible tendency to evil. The alienation of the heart does not arise from intellectual imbecility, or intellectual ignorance. The love of science is not the love of God. Religion is indeed not a little indebted to the researches of human science; but unhappily it is no uncommon thing for men endued with the most splendid genius and the most liberal acquisition in human science, to be distinguished for depravity of heart. True religion is not a mere intellectual theory, a philosophic system; nor does a man become the disciple of Christ in the same way in which he becomes the disciple of Plato, or Newton. Never was a lesson more effectually taught by the experience of our race, than that intellectual culture cannot produce holiness. The learning of the Scribes and Pharisees did not prevent them from rejecting the Saviour; but rather qualified and tempted them to stand forth his malignant and infuriate opposers. The absurdities of a debased pagan ritual were never confined to the ignorant and uninformed. Socrates and Seneca, Solon

and Lycurgus bowed at the altars of Jupiter and Apollo. Idolatry erected her temples amid the groves of the Academy, and published her sanguinary and licentious code amid all the light and learning of the Augustan age. No instance is to be found where a nation, or an individual, ever became the friend of God through the influences of mere intellectual cultivation. At the period when our blessed Lord came into the world, intellect had made its highest efforts; philosophy had exhausted all her vigour and acuteness; Greece and Rome had furnished the most splendid examples of reasoning and eloquence—examples so splendid, that next to the Bible, they remain to the present day the acknowledged standards of elegance and power; and yet they left the world "without God and without hope," and full of that "unrighteousness and ungodliness of men," against which "wrath is revealed from heaven." What has intellectual culture done for modern Europe? What has it done for France—the glory of all lands for purely intellectual and philosophical research? There is not a combination of more learned or acute men on the earth than the Royal Academy at Paris. Nor is there probably any where to be found a society of men more ignorant of God and holiness.

Nor will the institutions of civil government make men holy. Civil government may restrain the outbreaking of human corruption; may prevent lawless aggressions upon the welfare of society; may deter the abandoned from injustice and oppression; and while it is "a terror to evil doers," be "a praise to those who do well;" but it can never win back the heart of man to God. What civil government can do for men it has done already. It does not make men holy in the best governed Christian states. It does not in Britain; it does not among ourselves. It did not in the best governed republics and empires of the pagan world. Not even Antoninus Pius could influence Rome to be either holy or virtuous. All the legislative science and political advancement which rendered Athens and Sparta the models of their age could not rescue them from a superstitious polytheism. Legislators as well as philosophers have failed, and always will fail to regenerate the heart. No matter how wise and equal the laws; no matter what princi-

ples of government or modes of legislation may be adopted and enforced; no matter with how much skill the affairs of princes are adjusted; none of these things convey the knowledge of holiness and salvation. It is an instructive fact, that while pagan nations were advancing from one degree of literary and civil refinement to another, their religious character sunk in progressive if not in proportioned degeneracy. Not merely did it retain its uncultivated barbarism, but waxed worse with every accession of human wisdom. From the most exalted, or rather the least debasing system, that of siderial worship, it descended to "images made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and to creeping things." Never did it reach a lower abyss of degradation than when heathen lands had attained their acme of civilization and learning. And in a state thus abject did it continue "even under the Ptolemies in Egypt and the Cæsars in Rome," till the "fulness of time was come when God sent forth his Son."

Have then men ever become holy through the influence of false religions? Not certainly by paganism, as we have already seen. The Persians and Mahometans have, it must be confessed, made some advances in an apparent moral rectitude beyond the abject wickedness of purely pagan lands. The Persians were the descendants of Elam, the son of Shem; and with the rest of the nations early fell away in their apostacy from the worship of the true God. The purity of their faith was revived in the time of Abraham, but was corrupted again before the Babylonish captivity. It was revived by Zoroaster, who maintained that there is one supreme God, and a general resurrection and retribution to all according to their deeds. But while the Persian religion for centuries held its sway over a multitude of minds, it never made men holy. "The Persians," says Sismondi in his history of the downfall of the Roman empire, "had laws emanating from despotic power, which preserve order, but which secure to a nation neither justice nor happiness. They had that literary culture which feeds the imagination, but does not enlighten the understanding. Their religion and their aversion to idolatry satisfied the reason but did not purify the heart." It is also worthy of remark

that, for all that is venerable in antiquity and purity, the Persian religion was indebted to the Bible. By those who are best informed in oriental literature, Zoroaster is represented to have been "cotemporary with Daniel, and if not a Jew, yet perfectly acquainted with the Jewish Scriptures."[1] Nor is it less true that all that is valuable in the system of Mahomet was drawn from the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. Colonies of Jews were once scattered over Arabia, at a period when the religion of the Arabians was polytheism, and when there were three hundred and sixty idols in their principal temple at the Kaaba at Mecca. The character of Mahomet was austere; his imagination ardent; his temperance extreme; and he was disposed to religious meditations and lofty reveries. His chief thought at first was to fix his own belief, and purify it from the superstitions of his country. He recognized as God an eternal Spirit, omniscient, omnipresent, and incapable of being represented by any material image. He nourished this idea till the age of forty, when he resolved to become the reformer of his nation. He taught them the knowledge of the one God, but he called himself his Prophet. From the time he took this character, his life lost its purity, his temper its mildness, policy entered into his religion and fraud into his conduct. He dictated the Koran, for he could not read or write, and the sublimity of its language is to Mussulmans a proof of its inspired character. He admitted six revelations—those of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Christ, and his own. The religion of Mahomet leaned toward fatalism, but did not deny the influence of the will in human actions. Nor did it consist in doctrines only, but in the practice of justice and charity. It considers alms-giving the most rigorous duty; and the Koran exacts from a tenth to a fifth of a believer's income in charity. It enjoins prayer, ablution, and fastings. Five times a-day a Mussulman must pray. Fasts were so rigid, that during the month of Ramadam, one might neither eat nor drink, nor enjoy any gratification from sunrise to sunset. Before the time of Mahomet, the Arabs enjoyed unbounded licence; and he forbade dissoluteness only by reducing it within the bounds

[1] Prideaux's Connections and Graves on the Pentateuch.

of expediency and law. The blood of their enemies was a sure passport to the Mahometan Paradise. Every Mussulman, indeed, however bad, was sure of Paradise, after expiating his sins a suitable time in purgatory, not to exceed five thousand years. The most favourable exhibition of the religion of Mahomet shows its perfect powerlessness to form any thing like a spiritual character. We have spoken of its immoral tendencies in a previous lecture; and it were the merest farce to claim for it any spiritual influence. We freely grant to these religions all they can claim. And the most that can be said of them is, that they are not idolatrous. And if they have effected something in supplanting the existence of idolatry, nothing is more obvious than that their influence in this particular is to be attributed to the Bible. Wherever indeed men have ceased to bow down to the sun, moon, and stars; wherever they have ceased erecting pillars and statues on the tops of hills and mountains for the purpose of offering sacrifices to the host of heaven; wherever they have ceased erecting their temples and their images, and offering their fruits to the light, the air, the wind, the fire, the water, the earth; wherever they have renounced the grovelling superstition which led them to worship the darkness, the storm, the pestilence, and the Furies; wherever they have no longer erected monuments to the memory of the dead, and worshipped creatures like themselves; where they have abandoned their homage of animals and reptiles, birds and beasts, plants and herbs; where the rivers and the woods are no longer peopled with imaginary deities; where each favoured city and family has no longer its peculiar guardian gods; where the power of magic is no longer recognized, and the influence of oracles and augurs, of diviners and soothsayers has been renounced as idle and vain; where it is no longer a proof of wisdom to attempt to disclose future events by the flight of birds, the recollection of dreams, and the inspection of the entrails of beasts; we may say, without the fear of contradiction, that this change has been produced by the religion of the Bible. Reason has not done it. The institutions of civil government have not done it. Human science has not done it. The most fearful judgments have not done it. Nothing has

done it but the Bible. But for the Bible, the vilest idolatry would at this hour hold its unbroken sway over the world.

Where then had been the interests of holiness without the Bible? Whatever estimate we may form of the value of other influences upon the human character, this alone is the means of holiness. I do not know but here and there an individual may be found who may have become pious without the truths of the Bible; but I do not recollect any well-authenticated instance. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The moral renovation which fits the soul for heaven is effected by means which correspond with its nature. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." The Bible alone exhibits those appropriate materials for thought which are the selected instruments of a renovated character. There is no wisdom more unerring, no justice more inflexible, no grace more tender, no authority more commanding, no entreaty more importunate, no instructions more convincing, and no motives more persuasive and powerful, than are these appointed means of man's conversion—these weapons which are "mighty through God"—this sword by which the conscience is penetrated, "dividing asunder between the joints and the marrow, the soul and the spirit, and proving a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

There is one motive to holiness which the Bible unfolds which constitutes its great and distinguishing peculiarity. It is the love of God in the gift of his Son. All the motives to holiness are concentrated and condensed here, and presented and enforced with a power of thought and feeling that leave the most obdurate without excuse. "We beseech you by the mercies of God,"—here lies the strength of the appeal. The love of God in Christ is the great expedient of winning the wayward heart. "Holy love from God to man is what the Gospel reveals; holy love from man to God is what the Gospel inspires." The doctrines of the cross, in all their richness and variety, in all their peculiarity and tenderness, and in all their humbling and abasing influence, possess a marvellous adaptation to awaken the slumbering mind. They produce within it new and powerful associations. While in the most effective

manner they convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, they touch all the springs of feeling, and form the moral elements of the new man. No other truths so deeply affect the mind. "Nothing astonished me so much in all the Gospel," said a poor converted African, "as to hear that God is love." A prouder and more obdurate offender than he once said, "The love of Christ constraineth us." It is the glory of the condescending Deity that "He draws with the cords of love." When you tell a world that lieth in wickedness that the God they have offended is the God of pardons; when you show them the scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary, and tell them how the divine justice has been expiated by the death of his Son; while you give force and energy to every other truth, and draw around the conscience the cords of every other obligation, you make that appeal to gratitude, to *hope*, which is peculiarly fitted to encourage the trembling and move the obdurate. Like the rod of Moses, it rives the rocks of the desert. Until the intelligence reaches it that there is help in the mighty Saviour, the agitated mind throws around its enquiring glance for a refuge, and is driven back to the chambers of its own desolation and despondency. "God reconciling the world to himself by Jesus Christ," this is the glory of the Bible. This is the truth to which the Spirit of all grace has given such pre-eminence in disarming the hostile heart. Here is the concentrated light of God's revelation. Amid the thousand studded gems which beautify and give such splendour to the moral firmament, this is the clear and bright constellation which is always above the horizon, and pointing high toward the gate of heaven. Here are those truths and motives which are the mediate causes of a spiritual mind, and between which and the operations of the Holy Spirit there is such a coincidence, that they become the aliment of a spiritual and divine life. He who knows the heart of man has selected this as the best method of access to the minds he has formed; and like every other appointment of the Deity, it is full of consummate wisdom. Every where the same, it is every where effectual in accomplishing the purposes of eternal mercy. Evidence enough there is in the world every day to convince us of the superiority of the Bible as the great

means of holiness and salvation. And better days are yet to dawn. Like the rain and the snow, it shall not return void. Like the sun when he rises upon the mists of the ocean, it is destined to exhale all clouds of error. Its heavenly light shall penetrate the dark corners of our globe; the report of its glad tidings, echoing from land to land, shall roll through the nations; while "the heavens shall pour down righteousness, and the earth bring forth salvation."

But there is a caution that is not out of place while speaking of the Bible as the means of holiness. If it is not by the learning and wisdom of this world that the soul is fitted for heaven, no more is it by the mere learning and literature of the Bible. There is reason to fear the cases are not few, in which the Bible is regarded more as a volume to be described and eulogized, and as furnishing topics of intellectual research, than as a directory to heaven, and a guide to immortality. "The letter killeth." Biblical literature is not piety. A man may be a profound critic, an acute controversialist, an able expositor; his enquiries and reasonings may discover an enlarged and comprehensive acquaintance with the sacred volume; he may employ all his resources in the promotion of biblical knowledge; and yet be at heart a stranger to the sanctifying power of truth. In his cold walks of theoretical science, he may never once visit the Garden of the Cross. Or he might gaze upon them for half a century with his present vision, and never discover the great "mystery of godliness." The truths of the Bible are comprehended by the heart. To be destitute of the "single eye," is to be blind to its transforming glories. "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." The Gospel is a revelation of love. Christianity is love embodied in its purest form. And love can be comprehended only by love. I look upon no small portion of the biblical criticism of the present age as a curse to the Church. Such is all the Rationalism of Germany, and such is the modern Unitarianism of our own land. It is a cheerless region where the Rose of Sharon never blooms; a bleak and wintry sky where no ray from the Sun of righteousness visits the sterile soil. How can the branches flourish where not even a root is found but is art-

fully unclasped, or rudely torn from the Living Vine? As soon might you expect the feeblest infant to live and thrive cradled amid the mountain snows, as the genius of Christianity to flourish in such a clime. I tremble at recommending the literature of the Bible, lest I should do it at the expense of its spirituality. I venerate the Scriptures for their historical research, for their literary merit, for their legal and political wisdom, and for their lofty principles of liberty and morality; but I venerate them unspeakably more because they are "the wisdom of God and the power of God to salvation." Let others win the laurels to which human science may aspire; be it ours to guide the wandering to the feet of the Saviour; to lead them to his cross; to strew the cypress over the tomb where he was laid; and there, on that hallowed spot, with them renew our faith and our devotion!

But what is the character of the religion of which the Scriptures are thus instrumental? There is a beauty and sublimity in its spirit which throw all other religions into the shade. If there is a system of truth which is most obviously intended and fitted to refine and exalt the human character, that system is to be found in the sacred Scriptures. When the God of heaven unfolded his purpose of forming a people to his praise, and giving them a character that should correspond with the elevated principles of his own spiritual kingdom, he uttered his design in the following strong and emphatic language. "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you." What amazing truths lie concealed under such a design! The character which the Bible forms is formed upon the highest model. And what is that model? Is it the insensibility, the asperities, the anger, the pride, the egotism, the worldliness, which are so natural to men? Is it the cold indifference of a Stoical philosophy? Is it the affected tranquillity and ungoverned voluptuousness of the disciples of Epicurus? Is it the rank and wealth and scepticism of the Academics? Is it the intellectual rashness and moral phantoms of the modern Philosophists of Europe? No, it is none of these.

These have had their day, and done what they could to exorcise the foul fiend from the human heart, and left it more corrupt and wicked than before. The Author of this great and venerated book, by this instrumentality, imparts to men his own spirit; forms them in his own image; communicates to them the elements of his own divine excellence. It is a character never understood by the world before, and one which none of the princes of this world knew. The late celebrated Robert Hall, in a discourse of unrivalled excellence upon the influence of modern infidelity remarks, that "infidelity robs the universe of all finished and consummate excellence, even in idea. The admiration of perfect wisdom and goodness for which we are formed, and which kindles such unspeakable rapture in the soul, finding in the regions of scepticism nothing to which it corresponds, droops and languishes. The idea of Deity is composed of the richest elements. In the character of a benevolent Parent and Almighty Ruler, it embraces whatever is venerable in wisdom, whatever is awful in authority, whatever is touching in goodness. Human excellence is blended with many imperfections, and seen under many limitations. It is beheld only in detached and separate portions, nor ever appears in any one character whole and entire. So that when, in imitation of the Stoics, we wish to form out of these fragments the notion of a perfectly wise and good man, we know it is a mere fiction of the mind without any real being in whom it is embodied and realized. In the belief of a Deity, these conceptions are reduced to reality: the scattered rays of an ideal excellence are concentrated and become the real attributes of that being with whom we stand in the nearest relation, who sits supreme at the head of the universe, and pervades all nature with his presence." Although in nothing does man fallen and unregenerate now resemble this exalted portrait, yet is it the great design of the Bible to recover and restore him to this pristine integrity; to elevate him above his moral debasement, and re-invest him with the moral dignity which shall ultimately make him "like unto the angels," and "perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect."

God is light. So is the religion of the Bible. It has no

fellowship with darkness. Not one of its graces springs from stupidity or ignorance, but all of them from the knowledge of God, and from a clear, connected, and comprehensive view of his truth. False religions are founded in darkness. The religion of the Bible, like its Author, dwells in light. Light is its element. God also is love. And so is the religion of the Bible. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. He that loveth not knoweth not God." There is a love which extends itself to every sensitive nature within its knowledge and influence; which overlooks the limits of place, birth, and condition, and bestows its affections in accordance with the character, capacity, and importance of its objects; which seeketh not its own, and terminates on ends which leave out of sight every personal and individual interest: and such a spirit is the fragrance and perfume breathed every where through the Bible.

The views and spirit of this world are widely different from the views and spirit that are transfused into the soul by the holy Scriptures. The spirit of the world is the spirit of pride and inordinate self-esteem. It is the pride of talent and beauty, the pride of wealth and accomplishments, and the pride of rank and office. It lives for the praise of men. In place of this, the Bible imparts the loveliest of all the graces, a heaven-born humility; a lowliness of mind; a deep sense of unworthiness in the sight of God; a modest estimate of one's own worth, and an unassuming deportment before the world. It is a self-condemning, self-abasing spirit under the sentence of the divine law because we have sinned, and because there is mercy through Jesus Christ. It is a grace so resplendent, that even the unfallen might envy it. "Before honour is humility." The Bible commends a humble religion. Its love is humble; its faith is humble; its repentance is humble; its hopes, its joys, its raptures are all humble. Its heaven is humble, and for nothing is it so happy or desirable as that it is a world of everlasting humility. True greatness is no where found on earth except in a humble mind. And never is the archangel more elevated, more truly great, than when he bows his head low before the eternal throne. The spirit of the world is

obduracy and self will. It is invincible hardness of heart. It is impenitence that cannot be subdued. It is inflexible perseverance in sin. Truth cannot enlighten it; authority cannot control it; wrath cannot break, nor the tenderest mercy move or melt its persisting purpose. In place of this, the Bible imparts tenderness and contrition of mind. Under its soul-subduing influence, the spirit that never shrunk from danger, nor wept under suffering, turns pale at temptation, shrinks from sin, weeps over past follies, and looks on Him whom men have pierced, and mourns. The spirit of the world is grasping and covetous. It is inordinately desirous of wealth, and excessively eager to obtain and possess the treasures of time. It is gay, or pensive, as secular prospects wax or wane. It is stagnant and spiritless only when it sees there is nothing to gain or to lose by enterprise. Be it disappointed or gratified, the more vehement are its desires, and never is it so satisfied as to say, It is enough. In place of this, the Bible imparts a tranquil and happy confidence in the wisdom of Divine Providence, a grateful acknowledgment of the daily mercies which God bestows, a moderation in those desires which are directed to worldly enjoyments, and that lifted eye which no longer fastens on earth, but looks upward, where its resources are undiminished, its treasures never fade, and a crown of righteousness awaits all who love their Lord's appearing. The spirit of the world is the spirit of ambition. It is the desire of power. The object that glitters, and enchants, and vanishes, is to be clothed in purple, to sway the sceptre, and wear the diadem. And the more this ambitious desire is gratified, the more is poison injected into the deadly plague. In place of this, the Bible imparts a deep impression of the vanity of all things beneath the sun; a conviction that the fashion of this world passeth away; that the yoke of Christ is rather to be desired than the proudest sceptre; and that it were better to be the servant of the King of kings than the emperor of the world. The spirit of the world is the spirit of self-indulgence and guilty pleasure. The men of the world are lovers of pleasure more than the lovers of God. Like the prodigal son, they have wandered from their father's house, to feed on the husks

of the wilderness. They are eager for enjoyment, and find it in dissipation of thought, of feeling, and of deportment, and amid the alternate servitude and liberty, pains and pleasures which constitute their varied adventures. Their senses are flattered by the fleeting illusion, and they can speak of nothing and think of nothing but pleasure. Though made up of so many pieces and scraps, that you wonder they are not wearied in gathering it up, yet have they no other desire and no other object. Lawless pleasure, in all the forms of novelty and excess, notwithstanding its shame, its infamy, its ruin, is the idol of their hearts and the law of their existence. In place of this, the Bible imparts the love of God and duty. Pleasures it reveals, but they are found in doing the will of God; in accomplishing the great end of human existence, and in those vivid hopes which light up the dawn, and noon-day, and setting sun of an ever brightening existence. Those who have drank into its spirit do not live for the pleasures of earth, but are carried forward by a sort of spiritual instinct, beyond this dense and earthly wall by which they are environed. The Bible presents a prospect as much brighter and wider than the pleasures of the worldling, as are the pleasures of holy thought and feeling and expectation superior to the day dreams and grovelling pleasures of sense. The spirit of the world is the spirit of unbelief. It is the spirit that rejects the truth of God; that has no confidence in his declarations, and distrusts his promises and faithfulness. It leans to self. It has no wants, timidity, or despondency, which its own presumption cannot relieve. And not until corruptions have kept their ground so long as to be absolutely ruinous, and the day of hope so far spent as to be literally exhausted, does the soul that is under the dominion of unbelief, cry, and cry in vain, "Lord, save, or I perish!" In place of this, the Bible imparts faith in God and confidence in his word. It gives an affectionate practical trust in the divine testimony as recorded on its own sacred pages, and that unshaken confidence in the divine character, government, and veracity, which becomes the great principle and impulse of action. It gives subsistence to hope and demonstration to evidence; and while it appropriates grace to help in

every time of need, it anticipates blessings which, though unseen by the eye, are enjoyed by the heart. The spirit of the world is an unforgiving and revengeful spirit. It seeks injury for injury and blood for blood. What a mournful comment upon the character of man is the savage maxim, "Revenge is sweet!" In place of this, the Bible enjoins "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." This is a spirit so unnatural to man, that it has been reproached as unreasonable and absurd, and the ancients had not even a word to express it, or if they had, it represented it as a vice rather than a virtue. But how worthy of its Author! how sublime! how truly it bears the stamp of divinity! The wisest moralists of the wisest nations and ages represented revenge as a mark of a noble mind. But how different from the mind of Christ! and at what an infinite remove from the generous, exalted spirit of Him who, as he was sinking upon the cross, prayed for his murderers! The religion of the Bible stands opposed to all the selfish and mercenary affections of the human heart, and just so far as it prevails, eradicates and destroys them. "If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," they are found in the holy spirit and high moral virtues of a self-renouncing religion.

Such is the exalted spirit of the Bible, and such some of the great and distinguishing peculiarities of the religion it inculcates and imparts. There is one exalted Personage, and only one, in whom the high dignity of the Christian character was fully and perfectly illustrated. The example of the man Christ Jesus perfectly accords with his doctrines and precepts. He copied out the religion of the Bible in his life. His spirit was known, and developed, and is perfectly understood. He was rich, and for our sakes became poor; happy, and for us became a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs; the Prince of life, and died for us on the cross, that we might be rich, and honoured, and happy, and live with him. The only reward he sought was the reward which alone could gratify his benevolent mind:—diseases healed—sorrows soothed—tears wiped away—ignorance enlightened—the wayward counselled—the

desponding encouraged—the unholy made pure—the guilty forgiven—the lost saved. This was his reward. When men could not ascend to him, he descended to them. When they neither deserved nor sought his favour, he gave it undeserved and unsought. The abjectness, the sufferings, the sins of men were the magnet that drew him forth from his retirement and excited his commiseration. No toil could weary, no obstacles hinder, no opposition discourage, no delay interrupt, no cold and thankless insensibility dishearten him. From Bethlehem to Calvary he went about doing good. The history of men furnishes here and there a splendid illustration of active, self-denying, devoted piety; and we observe and remember it as a rare event. It is like a stream of water in a dry place—a green spot in the desert—an oasis amid Arabian sands. The life of Christ has no such inequalities. It does not strike us by its occasional and novel exhibitions, for they are uniform and constant. There is something greatly affecting in the Saviour's spirit. It is more than human. It belongs not to earth. It was never found except in his own immaculate bosom.

Whatever there is of true religion in the world resembles such a piety as this, though it falls far short of it. And how unspeakably above the famed excellencies of heathen lands! It is piety altogether of an original character. The heathen genius never conceived it. It never entered the mind of this world's philosophy to form such a character as that of St. Paul or Howard. Such developments of mind and heart never would have been made but for the Bible. It is not easy to conceive of a deeper, darker chasm than that which would be made by the absence of these principles which have formed thousands of characters assimilated to these, and given so high a direction to minds whose lofty movement is at such a distance from the low and abject spirit of this unbelieving and self-indulgent world.

Let it not be supposed that this is a light obligation under which the world is placed to a supernatural revelation. Holiness is the highest attainment of a rational creature. It is the greatest good which man ever can acquire. It is the greatest good in the universe. It is greater than wealth, greater than

pleasure, than honour, than happiness. It is the only good that may be sought at all times, under all circumstances, and at every hazard. It is the only good that may be sought as an end and for its own sake. A man is not necessarily praiseworthy because he is happy, nor blameworthy because he is unhappy. Seek, therefore, my young friends, not to be affluent and honourable—no, nor mainly to be happy. Seek what is more sublimely excellent, seek to be virtuous and holy. Seek that your hearts may be subdued and won to God by the power of his own truth. No natural amiableness of disposition, no mere cultivation of intellect, no good name in the world, no unimpeached rectitude in your transactions with your fellow-men, no punctuality in your attendance upon the ordinances of the sanctuary, and no external relation to the church of God can be a substitute for that internal holiness which is an indispensable preparation for the heavenly world. O, when will men understand and feel that nothing possesses importance compared with what relates to God and eternity! Nothing within the range of human thought deserves consideration compared with this. Never was there stronger evidence of folly than that man presents who chooses this world for his portion. If tears could quench the fires of that world of torment, those fires would be quenched at the remembrance of the folly that preferred this world to the salvation of the soul. And if tears could be ever shed in heaven, it would be at the remembrance of the supineness, the indifference with which those of you who have hope toward God are directing your way toward that "exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

A few short years, if not before, and you and I shall descend to the tomb. Time passes swiftly over the head that rests beneath the clods of the valley. As sleep that overtakes us at night leads us imperceptibly and gently through its long watches, and we neither number nor heed its hours, so will coming centuries revolve, and on the morning of a new world we shall wake as from a dream to stand before the tribunal of the great Judge. To-day, we are upon the stream of time; to-morrow, we are floated forth upon the ocean of eternity. There is no intermediate state of being—no line of separation

between this world and the next. Another step, and we have entered on the world of everlasting retribution. But what retribution is it to which we are destined? Momentous question! Is it to that world of peace and joy? or is it to those regions of perturbation and pain? Is it to those calm skies where no tempest rages and no billows roll; or is it to the eternal agitations of that lake of fire? O, tell me, were it not a melancholy state of existence to be gliding down the stream of time under the awful uncertainty whether it will land you in the realms of bliss or the regions of wo?

LECTURE XI.

THE PRE-EMINENCE OF THE BIBLE FOR THE INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

WE have already remarked that the Bible furnishes all those truths and motives which are the appropriate materials of a spiritual mind, and as such constitute the great and only means of personal holiness. Truth and love are the weapons which the Author of the Scriptures makes use of in the great moral contest that is going on in our world. In this respect, the religion of the Bible differs from all other religions Other religions have employed force, authority, stratagem: the power of the sword, the authority of princes, the policy of priests and statesmen have all been made use of to accomplish their selfish designs. But the Bible knows nothing of this. Though it reveals a system of truth, and requires affections every where opposed to the selfishness of the human heart, and the pride of human reason,—a system at war with human worldliness and sensuality, and that neither flatters the pride, nor tempts the avarice, nor pampers the lusts of men; yet does it reject with indignation every attempt to influence them except by considerations which commend themselves to the conscience. Frank and ingenuous in the expression of its claims, candid and open in the designs it aims at accomplishing, it counts on success only as its truths enlighten the understanding, awaken and regulate the conscience, and purify the heart. True religion has its seat in the soul. It is a matter not of external forms and observances, but of conviction and feeling. No man possesses it any further than he voluntarily embraces its principles and feels their power. The Bible therefore must necessarily depend for its triumphs, not upon the authority of human governments, or the tricks of sordid policy, or any concealment of its ultimate,

objects, or any appeals to human selfishness, but upon its own inherent excellence and high-born claims. Falsehood and sophistry never made a man at heart the friend of the Bible. Every true believer in the word of God has the witness within his own bosom, that he is not led away by "cunningly devised fables and the craftiness of men," but that his confidence in it is justified by the begun and growing conformity of his heart to the heavenly character which this word requires. The truths of the Bible have been brought home to his own soul "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." There is an agency that gives them effect which is exerted by God himself. We do not hear this still small voice, nor is it in any way an agency that is the object of our senses. The hand that accomplishes the work is unseen, and all that we can behold is the work itself accomplished. It is the supreme, the almighty agency of God, by the unseen power of his Holy Spirit. It is an influence that controls the thoughts, dispositions, and affections, and that makes the Bible the "wisdom of God and the power of God to salvation."

Now this constitutes one great pre-eminence of the holy Scriptures, and is fitted to show the obligations of the world to this sacred volume. It has higher claims to our regard even than the excellence of its truths. It reveals the existence and interposition of an omnipotent agent, known in the method of redemption by Jesus Christ, whose province it is to enlighten and renovate the heart, and give power and energy to his own revelations. This can be affirmed of no false religion. Just before the author of the Gospel left our world for his throne in the heavens, he promised his disciples that he would send the heavenly Paraclete, who should "reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment;" who "should guide into all truth;" who "should take of the things that are Christ's, and show them unto his people." The religion of the Bible therefore has this high and peculiar pledge of its efficacy, that it is associated with an omnipotent agency, which, by its control over the intellectual faculties and moral dispositions, renders the truth which God has revealed effectual in the moral transformation of man.

God has revealed himself in the Scriptures as One in Three. So distinct are the three, that they sustain distinct offices in the work of Redemption, and possess the properties of distinct persons; and yet so intimately are they identified in the divine nature, that they are the One only living and true Jehovah. This is a great mystery, and we receive it on the testimony of God. The Holy Spirit is not a mere influence, or power, or emanation of the Deity, but a living agent, to whom the Scriptures ascribe intelligence, choice, and power. He is represented as teaching, instructing, dictating, commanding, commissioning, sending forth, convincing, sanctifying, and bearing witness. To him are appropriated the true and proper names of the Deity. He is spoken of as eternal, omnipresent, omniscient, and as one who is worshipped as God. He is the direct and immediate Author of the Scriptures, while miraculous gifts and operations are every where ascribed to his power. There are also internal operations of the Spirit; that is, operations immediately exerted upon the mind itself. It is his province to illuminate the ignorant and benighted; to awaken the thoughtless; to convince the obdurate; to renew and sanctify the heart; to comfort and seal the heirs of salvation for their final inheritance, and fit them for the glory to be hereafter revealed. The truths of the Scriptures, though divine in their origin, are only the instrumental cause of all holy impressions. Their saving efficacy, in all cases, depends on the power and agency of the Holy Spirit. Nor are the nature and mode of this influence altogether undefined. It is in every instance connected with the truth; imparting to the mind clear perceptions of what God has revealed in his word, and rendering these perceptions impressive and effectual to the formation of a spiritual character. Truth is the motive of the change, and the agency of the Spirit its cause.

The terms and illustrations by which the Scriptures represent the work of the Spirit are strongly significant. Sometimes it is represented by the metaphorical language of the "new birth." When, in the moral history of man, a rebel becomes a child, it is because he is "begotten, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Sometimes it is exhibited as a "new creation." When from the confusion, darkness, and disorder of the natural mind, men are formed anew, and adorned with all the glories of a spiritual transformation; they are "his workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus after the image of him that created them." Sometimes it is set forth as a resurrection from the dead." If the dead in sin burst the bars of their cold sepulchre and come forth; it is because "he quickens them," and his Spirit is the sole author of this new and holy life. If the apostate child of Adam becomes the child of God; if his moral nature lives by new culture, and his faculties acquire a new development; if he sustains new relations, possesses new tastes, preferences, and pleasures; if he is devoted to new pursuits; if he has a new heart and a new spirit; it is from "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." "He that hath wrought him for this self same thing is God."

I need not tell you that a different theology than this has, to no inconsiderable extent, pervaded the Church of God in almost every age. Pelagius, as early as the fifth century of the Christian era, taught, that "for us to be men, is of God; but that for us to be righteous, is of ourselves." Of the same class are those teachers in modern times, who affirm, that while God cannot regenerate men, men regenerate themselves! We have no fellowship with views so directly opposed to the instructions of the Bible, and so utterly at variance with the experience of good men. I have often wondered at the rashness of those who have ventured thus to tamper with principles of such extreme delicacy and importance. There is nothing we should approach with greater fear and trembling than the work of that Almighty Spirit, to whom so much is entrusted, and whose office and honours are protected by such fearful sanctions. It is easy to give a wrong touch to the Ark of God. The great principle of the Spirit's influence is to the Christian system what the main spring and shaft are to a delicate and exact machinery. It is an impulse of prodigious power, and may not be jostled out of its place by curious and unhallowed hands. I cannot but regard the immediate, effectual interposition of the Holy Spirit, superadded to all the means of grace and sal-

vation, as one of those fundamental truths that are settled in heaven, and ought never to be unsettled on earth. It was just observed that the error to which we refer is at variance with all sound experience. What is more common than for men under strong convictions to be thrown into deep distress and agony from a view of the difficulties in the way of their conversion? What pious man has not been deeply sensible of his insufficiency to change his own heart, and a thousand times gratefully acknowledged that the change is to be attributed to a cause without himself? Who has not evidence within his own bosom, which is instead of a thousand exterior arguments, that there are obstacles to be surmounted in this great work, to which nothing is adequate but divine power? Nay, is not insufficiency one of the best lessons in the school of Christ?

I have seen men who went up to the house of God with the unbending spirit of rebellion against their Maker, who went away with the meekness and docility of little children. I have seen men of all ranks and ages, of all opinions and prejudices found in Christian lands, of every degree and variety of information from the shrewd jurist to the humble artizan, of all dispositions and characters, become alike and together the subjects of a moral transformation, the reality of which has been demonstrated by a subsequent life of practical godliness, and under the influence of light and motives which they had often previously resisted and which others around them still resist. How are these moral phenomena to be accounted for? If there be a divine influence in regeneration, there is nothing ambiguous, nothing doubtful, nothing wonderful in such results, except as they are expressive of wonderful power and mercy. When I see the forests bend and the sturdy oaks tremble; when I hear the tempest howl and behold the ocean foam with fury; though I see neither the cloud nor the air, I know there is "a strong and mighty wind." So when I see a whole assembly moved as the trees of the wood; when I behold the fountains of human depravity broken up, its deep abyss boil, its troubled waters cast up mire and dirt, and after the storm listen "to the still small voice:" I know that the arm of the King eternal, invisible, and immortal is made bare. "The wind bloweth where it

listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

The change of which the Spirit of God is the author is a moral, a spiritual change. It does not effect a transformation in the essential properties of the soul; but rather so enlightens and influences its existing properties, that, in a moral view, it becomes a new creature, and possesses altogether another spiritual character. It does not impart any new intellectual faculty, but rather enriches faculties that have become impoverished by sin; directs faculties that have been ill-directed; imparts sensitiveness and integrity to the conscience, and holiness to the heart. Nor is the influence that causes it an influence that is necessary in order to originate or sustain the obligations to holiness. There is enough of intellect and conscience in the most reprobate sinner to make it every way suitable and proper that he should be required to be holy, even though the influences of the Holy Spirit were forever withheld. The obligations to holiness are destroyed by nothing short of idiocy. "He that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

The reasons for the necessity of this divine influence may be stated in very few words. All men by the fall lost communion with God. Not only have they no original righteousness, but deeply seated original sin. Mental blindness, unfaithfulness of conscience, and a total depravation of all the moral affections, constitute the character of every natural man. That character is written in three memorable words,—"enmity against God." Now it were marvellous if such a man were the cause of his own regeneration. Love produced by enmity —holiness caused by sin—light created by darkness! The reason then why a divine influence is necessary is, that men never will, and never can become holy without it. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life;—no man can come to me except the Father who have sent me draw him." Both these representations are alike entitled to our confidence. Until God draws them, no matter what the variety and novelty of their mental developments, no matter what the rigour of their

external reformation, no matter what the strength of their most solemn purposes of repentance, they depart farther from him.

It has been already intimated that the Divine Spirit acts on the mind itself. A misconception of the truth in this particular has induced error. The disciples of the Arminian school do not, in expressed terms, deny the doctrine of divine influence. And yet they virtually deny it. Dr. Whitby himself concedes that "God vouchsafes some inward operations, or assistance to incline men to what is good, and work conversion in them;" while at the same time he asserts, that this influence is confined "to a more clear representation of the truth, that we may have a fuller evidence and stronger conviction of it." Such is the modern doctrine of the same school. Men are not wanting at the present day who affirm that all the influence which the Spirit of God exerts is a moral, or suasory influence; and that it is impossible the mind should be subjected to any other. But this whole system is untrue. Who has told us that he who created the human mind cannot control and govern it; and that when light and motives can no longer influence its course, by the same voice by which "he spake and it was done, and commanded and it stood fast," so express his omnipotent will that the sinner shall turn and live? What is there in the laws of mind to prevent omnipotence from arresting its attention, impressing its conscience, and changing its affections? Away with all this philosophy, falsely so called! The single question is, does the Spirit of God, in changing the heart through the intervention of truth, act upon the truth, or upon the mind? How does it act upon the truth? Does it change it? does it present it in such a way that the hostile mind falls in with it? The door is closed. The mind itself is inaccessible. The heart must be first opened, as was the heart of Lydia when she received the things that were spoken by Paul. The Saviour made use of clay to open the eyes of him that was born blind. But it was not the clay that opened them, but the Saviour himself. And though the analogy does not hold in all respects, it illustrates the thought we wish to convey. The change in regeneration is effected by

the Holy Spirit through the truth, while the influence of the Spirit is exerted, not on the truth, but on the understanding and heart. Men may not always know how this moral transformation was effected, except that it was by an influence above all the power of second causes. With the man who was born blind, they can say, "One thing I know, that whereas I was once blind, I now see." And if any doubt the immediate power of God in their conversion, with him they might well reply, "Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes!"

What is the change effected in regeneration? Is it a mere resolution to forsake the ways of sin and death? Is it the mere preference of religious duties and a religious life to the world? What then prevents the anxious and convinced sinner from being converted, when he forms resolution upon resolution to become the child of God, and when, amid the agonies of his conviction, the world to him is a mere cipher? What prevents the dying sinner from being converted, when he would give ten thousand worlds for one smile of mercy? What prevents the benighted sinner from being converted, when, in contempt of every worldly interest, he prostrates himself beneath the idol-car? What prevents the self-righteous sinner from being converted, when he "gives all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burned," in order to obtain the favour of God? Regeneration lies deeper than this, else might it indeed be effected by moral suasion. It consists in a "new heart and a new spirit." It is a state of mind that hates sin and loves holiness; that believes the record that God has given of his Son, and trusts in him alone for salvation; that not only resolves to love God, but loves him,—more than the world, more than self, more than every thing. In effecting such a change, there are difficulties which no influence merely suasory, be it human, angelic, or divine, can remove. There is not a consideration in the universe sufficiently alluring to win, or weighty enough to break, a supremely selfish heart. The Holy Spirit imparts no omnipotence to motives; he exerts it himself. *They* do not open the eyes of the blind, but *he* opens them. *They* do not take away the heart of stone and give the heart of

flesh; *he* does it, himself "working in men to will and to do of his own good pleasure"

But you will naturally ask, Is this influence effectual wherever it is exerted? It is effectual. It overcomes resistance. The struggle of the depraved mind, and all its angry conflict with truth and motives is over when the mighty Spirit speaks. No sooner does he touch the heart than the work is accomplished. The effect is produced just as certainly as the influence is exerted. The cause is controlling and decisive. It acts upon the will and destroys resistance. It is "effectual calling." And it is a signal act of mighty power—a power that speaks into being what had no being before—a power that lays its commands on things that do not exist, and effectually enforces obedience. No laws of matter or of mind can accomplish this mighty work. No means, no second causes can accomplish it. Parents cannot accomplish it by all their solicitude and faithfulness. Christians cannot accomplish it by all their expostulations and counsel. Ministers cannot accomplish it by all their preaching. Bibles and Sabbaths cannot accomplish it by all their combined and concentrated energy. The law cannot accomplish it by its terrors nor the Gospel by its tenderness. The selectest mercies cannot accomplish it nor the heaviest judgments. Wars, earthquakes, and pestilence cannot accomplish it. The rending rocks, the deep thunder, the vivid lightning cannot accomplish it. Angels cannot accomplish it by all their watchfulness and guardianship. The Spirit of God alone accomplishes it, and by the excellency of his power.

It is not unnatural also to enquire whether this influence is extended to all? If it were, one thing is certainly true, that all would become holy and finally saved. It is therefore a sovereign influence. It is imparted and withheld not without reason; not without the best of reasons; but for reasons unknown to us. In this, as in other things, the Sovereign Arbiter does not treat all alike. It is not extended to all to whom God is able to extend it, but to all to whom he is pleased to extend it. There is a theory which affirms that God shows mercy to as many as he is able to show mercy; while the theory of the Bible unequivocally and in strong contrast affirms

that he extends this agency to as many as he sees best, and "hath mercy on whom he will have mercy." It required no more effort in Omnipotence to create the world than to create an atom; and it requires no more effort from him to regenerate one man than another. If you ask why he ever withholds this gracious influence, I must cover my face and be silent. Or if I give utterance to a single thought while dwelling on this inscrutable mystery, can only say, "Even so, Father! for so it seemed good in thy sight." This is one of the "secret things which belong to God."

Will any think it strange that with this last characteristic of the Spirit's influence, I still say that it is one of the distinguishing glories of the Bible? It has no greater glory; nor has the Divine mind any greater mercy than is here unfolded. And those who deny him this take away the only ground of hope. We may say of this great truth, what the great Reformer so justly said of another. It is the "*Articulus aut stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ.*" With it the Church and the Bible stand or fall. The denial of it is a virtual subversion of the whole Gospel. Though too searching a principle, and too humbling to the pride of man not to be frittered away, unless there be great self-renunciation and simplicity of spirit, and great union of heart, of effort, and of prayer; yet can it never be too highly appreciated. Every holy affection and purpose that finds a dwelling among men, and that is cherished in the cold bosoms of this low world, is from this eternal source. The holy and happy emotions that light up so many smiles within the otherwise cheerless and curtained chambers of the soul; the benignant designs that diffuse such a charm over this otherwise desponding world, and throw their perspective into the far vale of futurity, would all be turned again into gloom and darkness but for this power of the Highest that overshadows them. "Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briars; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city. The pastures shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks, until the Spirit be poured from on high." The shades of night will never be chased away; the rigours and silence of win-

ter will lock up the world in its icy chains until the Sun of Righteousness arise. It is the pre-eminence of the Bible that it discloses this dispensation of the Spirit.

May we not easily see in view of this great peculiarity of the Scriptures, why it is that the gospel of the Son of God has made such progress in our world? The strength of false religions lies in the power of custom and habit, in the most unworthy appeals to the passions and interests of men, in the constraints of human authority and in the sword. They have all failed for want of some inherent power, some attendant influence upon the mind to render them effectual;—an influence which they could not secure because they were false. Not one of them has been able to stand forth alone, and perpetuate itself unaided by artifice, or arms, or the power of the civil government; and none of them could look to any higher source for aid. Mahomet was occupied three years in making fourteen converts. After seven years' effort, when he fled from Mecca to Medina, he numbered but one hundred and one followers. Neither the religion of Mahomet, nor any of the forms of paganism carried with them their own inherent evidence of their truth, and of their divine origin; nor has that great and Almighty Being who governs the moral as well as natural world given them any testimony of his approbation. The Bible, on the other hand, carries with it this evidence of its divine origin, that it is attended with the mighty power of God. When the despised Son of Mary hung upon the cross, who would have thought that the religion of which he was the Author was destined to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea? Who would have thought, that contrary to all human probabilities, in opposition to all human power, and striking as it did a deadly blow to all the idolatry of self, it would have so triumphed over error, superstition and wickedness, changed the heart of man, the form of human society, and the religion of the world? Look a moment at this wonderful fact. Here is a system the leading principles of which are not discoverable by the lights of nature and reason, a system that is to be propagated not by force, but by conviction, becoming the living religion of all the nations of the

earth. At the expiration of forty days after the death of its Founder, it numbered one hundred and twenty followers; immediately after, three thousand; and soon after, five thousand more. In the progress of a single century, it extended itself over Syria and Lybia, Egypt and Arabia, Persia and Mesopotamia, pervaded Asia Minor, Armenia, and Parthia, and even large portions of Europe. Unfolding as it did God in human nature, declaring as it did the substitution of the innocent for the guilty, insisting as it did upon a radical transformation of the human heart,—principles which are to the Jew a stumbling block, and to the Greek foolishness—it entered upon the conquest of the world. The learning of Athens, the wealth of Corinth, the pride of Rome bowed before it. It waved its standard amid the refinements of civilization, and triumphed over the degradations of barbarism. No climate arrests its progress; no form of human society can exclude it. Everywhere its effects are the same; the same its illuminations of the understanding, its convictions of the conscience, its renovation of the heart; its holiness, its hopes, its joys, its prospects the same. It is natural to ask, whence this success? Never was a change wrought in the character of man by means so simple, so unostentatious, so utterly at war with all the pride and egotism of the human heart. We see no power proportioned to the effect. What was it? It cannot be difficult to see what it was. God was with it. The secret of its success is found in the attendant power of its Author. No natural causes can account for such a phenomenon as the wide extension and the hallowed effects of the Bible. It is a phenomenon altogether unique in its kind, and produced only by the instrumentality of truth under the broad seal of heaven. Nor have its triumphs ceased. These commendations and honours are not flowers thrown upon its tomb. The moral efficacy of the Scriptures is demonstration that they are "living oracles," and that the word of God is "quick and powerful" beyond all other power. Men are conscious of the spiritual excellence it reveals and imparts. When we can look round upon this magnificent and beautiful creation, and doubt whether it is the work of the divine hand, then too we may look at the

effects of the Bible, and doubt whether they discover the work of the divine mind. And this they will discover more and more. The evidence is accumulative, and accumulating every hour. It is unlimited but by the boundaries of the earth; it is prospective, and shall never terminate but with the end of time. Not only has the Gospel made rapid progress in our world, but it shall make still more wonderful progress. The Spirit of God has but begun to descend. The chief part of his work and reward is yet in expectation. These Scriptures go forth, not only under the sanction, but under the promised, assured, effectual, and still more abundant blessing of their Author in time to come. He has said, "As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth. It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it." With the Bible in their hands, and the Spirit of God among their people, the ministers of salvation "shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace. The mountains and the hills shall break forth before them into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." With this influence, the wilderness shall be turned into a paradise, and Lebanon into Carmel. The Bible will march onward in defiance of all the indifference of a world that lieth in wickedness, of all the arts of philosophy, and all the virulence of relentless persecution. While other religions, devised by human wisdom, and propagated by the secular arm, shall be seen to possess no self-perpetuating power, and pass away, and leave no memorial behind them; the religion of the Bible shall live, and be diffused, and find its triumphs in the moral purity and happiness of "a great multitude which no man can number." Myriads, by this gracious influence, will yet be delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of

God's dear Son; and myriads more will yet rise up "an exceeding great army," from the valley where there were "bones very many and very dry," and where breath came upon them from the four winds. Go and stand in the midst of some of those numberless scenes of wonder and of mercy, of sovereignty and of omnipotence, where the Spirit of God has moved the assemblies of his people; where hundreds have trembled as on the verge of wo; and where, after the storm was past, the voice of mercy has whispered divine peace, and awoke their everlasting song; and you may appreciate, in some small degree, the love and power of the Holy Spirit. If you look forward to what this celestial Comforter will yet accomplish, when the great mass of human minds shall be subjected to his gracious influence; when so many hearts shall be purified, and so many lives renewed; when every land shall be redeemed from its corruption and bondage, and the world assume a character which shall be the counterpart to the great truths which this divine agent impresses on the soul; with overwhelming gratitude may you recognize the pre-eminence of his great work. We anticipate with confidence the ultimate triumphs of the Bible because there is no inconstancy of purpose, no weakness, no despondency in the mind of the Spirit. The work of the adorable Saviour was finished when he bowed his head and sunk upon the cross; while the ever-blessed Spirit has but just entered on his wonder-working career. It is reserved for him to gather his laurels from the sheaves of the coming harvest, and find his reward in the purity and blessedness of a regenerated world.

Permit me also to remind you, my young friends, that the same divine influence which is the hope of the world is also your hope—your only hope—your great and only incentive and encouragement in the divine life. Thus Paul considered it when he said, "When I am weak, then am I strong." Thus a pious female of the last century considered it, when uttering the emotions of all the effectually called, she exclaimed, "Though I am perfect weakness, I have omnipotence to lean upon." Thus the ever-blessed Spirit himself considered it when he left the injunction, "Work out your salvation with fear and

trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." I know not why men should stumble at the threshold of their enquiries, over their dependence on the Spirit of God; as though this discouraged rather than encouraged them; as though it shut the doors of heaven rather than kept them open; as though it retarded and bewildered them in their progress rather than led them onward; as though, because "without Christ they can do nothing," they cannot do all things "through Christ strengthening them." I know not why it is not your privilege and mine to make the same practical use of our dependence on the Spirit of grace that was made by patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs. And sure I am, the use they made of it was not to relax the bonds of obligation, encourage indifference, and sanction sloth and procrastination; but to impart strength in weakness, hope in despondency, courage in depression, darkness, and difficulty, and induce them to "take hold of God's strength and be at peace." Man in his best estate is weak and fallible. Of the choicest human endowments we may say, "This treasure we have in earthen vessels." Your strength is made perfect by conscious weakness. If the Spirit of God help not your infirmities, you are truly weak. But confident of his support, "with a thousand perils in your eye," you may say, "None of these things move me; neither count I my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy." Not a little of the darkness and despondency which perplex men in the present world is to be attributed to the low views they entertain of the divine power and goodness. Just views of these attributes would always dispel the cloud. "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Whatever reasons men have to distrust themselves, they have none to distrust him.

I will not close this lecture without adding another thought. How obvious, in view of the principles which have been suggested, is the privilege and duty of prayer. "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him." I know of no other way

of procuring these divine influences than to solicit them. "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." A man who feels that his heart is wholly inclined to evil, "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," yea, "enmity against God," cannot live without prayer, and indulge any hope that he will ever become a converted man. He will find his conscience more and more obdurate, his heart more and more fortified against the claims of the Bible, and hardened in sin; while the spirit and maxims of the world, and the subtle and ceaseless power of him who "goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour," rivet the chains of sin and death. The Christian who would resist the strength of his natural corruptiuns and surmount the hindrances which beset his path to heaven, and who would not sink in utter despondency before the responsibility and perils of his high calling, must daily aspire after that divine aid which makes his progress certain and his triumph sure. The minister of the Gospel who would be raised above discouragement in view of his own insufficiency and the greatness of his work may, if he have the faith and prayer to ally his own weakness with the energy of the Holy Spirit, persevere in his labours, not only with undiscouraged cheerfulness and resolution, but comforted hopes. The church that "sows in tears may reap in joy." The spirit of prayer will give her confidence and hope. Whom she cannot awaken, and convince, and convert, God can rouse from their apathy, open their hearts to understand his word, and at a time and in a way that shall make his own power and grace the most conspicuous. Prayer makes the doubting hope, the feeble strong. It gives humility and confidence in God. It makes every effort for the salvation of men spiritual and holy. "Prayer moves the hand that moves the world." Who would be insensible to the value of prayer?

LECTURE XII.

THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE WORLD TO THE BIBLE FOR THE SABBATH.

EVERY reflecting man must, one would suppose, contemplate with grateful admiration the great wisdom of the divine Author of the Scriptures in the institution of the Sabbath. I know of nothing like this observance in any other system of religion except that revealed in the Bible, unless it be some faint traditions of it in some pagan lands of remote antiquity. It is a weekly observance; fixed and permanent; hebdomedal from its original institution and to the end of time. Some of the ancient pagan nations had something in the form of an hebdomedal observance. Hesiod, the celebrated Greek poet of Bœotia, who lived about nine hundred years before the coming of Christ, says, "the seventh day is holy." Homer, who flourished about the same period, and Callimachus, also a Greek poet, who flourished in the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes, about seven hundred years later, speak of the seventh day as holy. Lucian also, a Greek writer, born at Samosata, who flourished about four hundred years after Callimachus, says, "The seventh day is given to the schoolboys as an holiday." Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, says, "No city of Greeks or barbarians can be found which does not acknowledge a seventh day's rest from labour." In the earlier ages of Greece, the years were numbered by the return of seed time and harvest, and the several seasons of labour and rest; and the day divided not into hours, but into morning, noon, and evening. The months of the Greeks were divided into *decads*, or three periods of ten days each; and I do not find any mention of a division of time into weeks among that people. There was no Sabbath among the ancient Romans. Their year was originally divided by Romulus into ten months; and

afterwards, by Numa, into twelve. Their months like those of the Greeks, were divided into three parts, kalends, nones, and ides. The custom of dividing time into weeks did not obtain until the reign of the emperor Severus.[1] Both the Greeks and Romans had their days of cessation from labour, but they were not hebdomedal. They were also religious observances; that is, they were devoted to the honour of their pagan gods. They were days on which their altars smoked with sacrifices; days of festivity; days on which their public games were celebrated, and on which their temples, groves, and sacred fields were stained with blood and resounded with bacchanalian madness. When heathen poets and historians therefore speak of holy days, they mean days of mirth and wickedness. Such are the days of rest throughout all Mahometan countries. A late correspondent in one of our religious periodicals, describes a Sabbath in Constantinople as a day of universal sport and diversion.[2] Modern missionaries, if I mistake not, uniformly testify, that there is no Sabbath in pagan lands. I have conversed with gentlemen of high intellectual and Christian character, who have resided years in China and India, who have informed me, that they could never see any signs of a sabbatical observance in those vast countries. Nor have I been able to find any traces of a Sabbath among our own aborigines. The remark therefore needs no qualification that the Sabbath, as its design and duties are disclosed in the Scriptures, is one of the strong peculiarities of a supernatural revelation. It was given to the great progenitor of our race while he was in a state of unfallen innocence; it was the first command, taking the precedence in point of time even to the prohibition of the Tree of Knowledge; it rests on the essential relation of a creature to his glorious Creator. During the whole progress of the patriarchal age you find traces of its observance. The manner in which its observance was revived and re-established before the commencement of the Mosaical economy and before the Israelites came to mount Sinai, proves that it was an institution previously recognized, and had never

[1] Potter's Antiquities of Greece, and Adam's Roman Antiquities.

[2] Cheever's Letters to the New York Observer.

been entirely lost. The authority and dignity given to it in the moral law affords decisive proof of its perpetual obligation. The allusions to it in the Psalms and in the Prophets, as well as its strict observance under the New Testament, show that it was destined to form a part of the Gospel dispensation. The Saviour and his apostles honoured it, by honouring the Ten Commandments as of perpetual force and obligation; by respecting its sanctity in their own deportment, and by recognizing its continuance at a period when all obligation to a merely Jewish institution would long have ceased. Nor was any thing abrogated under the Christian dispensation with respect to the Sabbath, except those temporary and figurative enactments which constituted the peculiarities of the Jewish age, and changed the Jewish Sabbath into the "Lord's Day."[1] The Sabbath therefore is one of the great peculiarities of a supernatural revelation. And not only is it one of its strong peculiarities, but an institution for the existence and influence of which the world is under untold obligations to its great Author.

We may advert to this institution in the first instance, simply as a day *of rest*. One principal design of it was to give both man and beast one day's respite from labour out of every seven. It deserves our special notice, that the letter and spirit of the divine command require both man and beast to abstain from all servile occupations on this day. Rest constitutes one of the essential parts of this observance. In the language of the Scripture, to "profane the Sabbath" is the same thing as to labour upon the Sabbath, while to *sanctify* the Sabbath signifies to rest from labour. The Jews were so scrupulous in this particular that they would not even take up arms in self-defence on this day; so that when Antiochus Epiphanes and Pompey availed themselves of this conscientious tenderness, and attacked them on the Sabbath day, they became the victims of their fury without opposition. It was designed to be a day of respite from anxiety and toil; a

[1] See these positions illustrated and defended in an able treatise on the Authority and Perpetual Obligation of the Sabbath, by Daniel Wilson, D.D. now Bishop of Calcutta.

day of refreshment both to the mind and to the body; and though not required to be a day of feasting, was specially forbidden to be a day of fasting and sadness.

And is there not wonderful wisdom and benignity in such an arrangement? Man was not made for constant and unrelieved employment. He was not formed for seven days' toil, but for six. No doubt it seems to many persons, that the mere fact of resting one day in seven can exert very little influence on the condition of our own race. To men who never labour, it is not strange that this thought should sometimes occur. To the mass of pagan lands, whose life is one of dreaming indolence and sloth, the periodical recurrence of such a rest would not make much difference in their condition. But to a man whose mental energy is in a state of perpetual excitement; to a laborious working community; such a rest is like the soft slumbers of midnight when it covers with its gentle folds an agitated and trembling mind, and a body overpowered with toil. The command to *rest*, it will be recollected, stands not alone. "Six days shalt thou labour." It is in the combined and contrasted influence of such an arrangement only that the Sabbath finds its appropriate place. There is nothing healthful that is still and stagnant; and there is nothing cheerful and placid where there is no cessation from the exhausting toil of this busy and care-worn world. God has given laws to this organic frame which cannot be violated with impunity. Man can no more labour a series of years without the Sabbath than he can labour a series of days without nocturnal repose. The measure of weekly rest is as wisely determined by the Author of our physical constitution as is the measure of our diurnal rest. When in defiance of the laws of nature and heaven, France abolished the Sabbath, and rested one day in ten, instead of one in seven, the experiment proved that the amount of productive labour was diminished by the change. It has been well ascertained that the proceeds of labour would, in any considerable period of time, be greater from six days in the week than from the whole seven. "If there were two contiguous nations, the one of which observed the day of rest, and the other laboured every day in the year,

and if in industry and the number of labourers they were equal, there can be little doubt that the profits of the former would be considerably greater than those of the latter." Facts might be greatly multiplied to show that the repose of the Sabbath is indispensable to the most healthful and vigorous exercise of the physical powers. In nothing has the Creator more obviously accommodated his government to the physical constitution of man than in prescribing this weekly rest. Just as a beast of burden breaks down prematurely, that is worked every day in the year, will the powers of human life prematurely run down if the toil of the week is not succeeded by the repose of the Sabbath. In an enquiry made a few years since, before a committee of the British House of Commons, in relation to the influences of the Sabbath, an eminent physician, who had practised between thirty and forty years, testified, that "men of every class who are occupied six days in the week would in the course of life be gainers by abstaining from labour on the seventh." The Sabbath has been emphatically called "the working man's friend." Who can doubt, that one motive which influenced its great Author to institute it was compassion to the poor? A manufacturing, an agricultural, or even a commercial community, deprived of the Sabbath, could not live out half its days. One reason why princes, ministers of state, and seamen do not live so long as other men, is, that they have no weekly day of rest. A few short years of vigorous, excited exertion, without the weekly intervention of this repose, and both body and mind lose their nerve and sinew. And there is nothing to refresh their languor and invigorate their debility but *rest.* The mind can no more bear to be over-worked than the body. It becomes oppressed and burdened, and sinks in depression, and not unfrequently, from its mere neglect of this day of rest, wanders in derangement. The truest economy of human life will be found in the provisions of that day of mercy, which, for the time being, shuts out the contrivance, care, perplexity, and responsibility of business, and invites to calm repose.

It may be seriously doubted whether this distinct design of the Sabbatical institution is sufficiently considered. It is a

day of *rest.* No man has the warrant from heaven to make it a day of labour, except those who minister at the altar. "The priests under the law profane the Sabbath and are blameless." No, the Sabbath is not appreciated as a day of rest. There was no day in Paradise to be compared with that "seventh day which God blessed and sanctified, because that in it he rested from all his work which he created and made." Light was never more beautiful, nor sounds more melodious, than when Eden was first lighted by the dawn of this day of rest, and listened to the voice that blessed the first-born Sabbath. Nor was the benediction recalled after ungrateful man had disobeyed his Maker. Man was cursed, and made to toil in the sweat of his brow; woman was cursed, and her sorrows multiplied; the ground was cursed, and doomed to thorns; but no curse alighted on this day of rest. "The Sabbath was made for man." Amid the deep depression and unmingled darkness of the fall, this day still remained the unobscured, unequivocal pledge of some distant though then unknown good.

The Sabbath may also be regarded as pre-eminently the means of intellectual advancement. It is worthy of remark that the original law ordaining the Sabbath contains no explicit injunction that it be a day of religious observances, unless it be contained in the phraseology which requires that it be kept holy. Nor is there any injunction in relation to the religious exercises of the day in the Old Testament, except that a burnt offering of two lambs were on that day added to the morning and evening sacrifices. Reason itself teaches us that if God has reserved one day in seven as a sacred rest, that portions of it at least ought to be occupied in religious services. Hence we find, that under the old dispensation, God set apart the entire tribe of Levi, one twelfth of the Hebrew nation, not merely to perform the rites and sacrifices which the ritual enjoined, but to diffuse over the great mass of the people religious and moral instruction. In sketching the characters and fortunes of the different tribes, their great Lawgiver says, "Of Levi, let thy Urim and thy Thummim be with thy holy one; they have observed thy word and kept thy covenant; they shall

teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law." To them was the custody of the sacred volume consigned, with the ark of the covenant; and they were required to gather the people together periodically, "men, women, and children, and the stranger within their gates, that they may hear, and learn, and fear the Lord their God, and observe to do all the words of his law." Hence, when Nehemiah assembled the Jews, after their return from the captivity, and restored their religious worship, "Ezra the scribe brought the book of the law before the congregation, and read therein from morning until mid-day. So they read in the book of the law distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused the people to understand the reading." They analysed the word of God, and expounded it at large, and showed its import and meaning. And the same usage prevailed under the New Testament. The Saviour established an order of men, whose peculiar office and employment were to teach and instruct the people in the great truths and duties of a supernatural revelation; to call up their attention; to give them just apprehensions of what God has revealed, and to enforce upon them the obligations of his gospel. If you turn to the New Testament, you find that this service was performed, regularly and specially, on each returning Lord's-day. And this is one of the great peculiarities of revealed religion, and one of the distinguished blessings of the Sabbath. Ministers of religion are indeed found in every community, pagan as well as Christian. Wherever idols are worshipped, there are altars and priests; there are soothsayers and diviners. But their duties are confined to the performance of religious ceremonies. They never attempt the religious and moral instruction of the great mass of the people, and never desire it. But the Sabbath of the Scriptures is devoted to different ends. In the performance of its appropriate duties in Christian lands, every man becomes a learner, and derives his instructions from the best and most important sources. He hears the holy Scriptures; he listens to the instructions and counsels of wisdom from the house of God; he occupies a place in the school of Christ, and becomes familiar with subjects that interest his mind,—that elicit thought and enquiry, and induce no small degree of men-

tal discipline and capacity for intellectual effort. Ignorance and barbarism form no part of the character of men who revere the Lord's-day. You cannot consign to intellectual obscurity a community that is subjected to the illuminations of the Sabbath. Carry the privileges of this day to the most barbarous people on the globe, and just in the proportion in which they are subjected to its influence, are they elevated from intellectual degradation. It would probably strike us with surprise to be informed how large a portion of men exists, whose only opportunity of information is derived from the Sabbath. If there is an exception to be made from the general spirit of this remark, it is in favour of the "daily press;" and for this reason do I look upon those who conduct it, as sharing with the pulpit no common responsibility. I would say more upon the importance of the Sabbath in this particular, should I not appear unduly to magnify mine office. If a minister of the Gospel is laboriously devoted to his own intellectual and moral culture, the Sabbath, constituting as it does one seventh part of human life, furnishes no contemptible opportunity for mental improvement. Its instructions are designed to affect the great mass of mankind, and address themselves equally to all orders and classes of men, not overlooking the tenderest and most docile age; for scarcely do children come into existence in Christian lands than they are encircled with the light of Sabbaths. There is something too in the kind of instruction which the Sabbath communicates that has the happiest effect on the human mind. It relates to themes which call the soul away from the bustle of the world, to contemplate the wonderful works of God in creation, providence, and redemption. It casts a vail over what is seen, and uncovers to the eye of the mind what is unseen. It throws back into oblivion the lying vanities of sense and time, and brings forward the permanent realities of eternity, every where disclosing facts, principles, and results which arrest the wandering intellect, and are fitted to expand and exalt it for ever. Many a sleeping genius reposing within the curtains of its own unconscious powers has been awakened to hope and action by the instructions of the sanctuary; and many a germ of thought, which

otherwise had wasted its fragrance on the air, has taken root and bloomed on this consecrated soil. It were a curious but not unprofitable enquiry to institute, How many well educated men in Christian lands have received the first impulse and suggestion in their lofty career from the instructions of the Sabbath? Exclusive immersion in the perplexities and cupidity of secular vocations debases the intellectual character; and it is only by being conversant with objects more exalted that the mind projects her noblest achievements. I am persuaded more is accomplished, directly or indirectly, by the various institutions of the Sabbath, in enlightening the great mass of mind, than is accomplished in any other way, and that it is no undeserved commendation of it to say, that it is the day of light to this benighted world.

The Sabbath also lies at the foundation of all sound morality. Morality flows from principle. "Out of the heart are the issues of life." Let the principles of moral obligation become relaxed, and the practice of morality will not long survive the overthrow. No man can preserve his own morals; no parent can preserve the morals of his children, without the impressions of religious obligation. If you can induce a community to doubt the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures; to question the reality and obligations of natural religion; to hesitate in deciding whether there be any such thing as virtue or vice—whether there be an eternal state of retribution beyond the grave—or whether there exists any such being as God; you have broken down the barriers of moral virtue, and hoisted the flood-gates of immorality and crime. I need not say, that when a people have once done this they can no longer exist as a tranquil and happy people. Every bond that holds society together would be ruptured; fraud and treachery would take the place of confidence between man and man; the tribunals of justice would be scenes of bribery and injustice; avarice, perjury, ambition, and revenge would walk through the land, and render it more like the dwelling of savage beasts than the tranquil abode of civilized and christianized men. If there is an institution which opposes itself to this progress of human degeneracy, and throws a shield before the interests of moral virtue

in our thoughtless and wayward world, it is the Sabbath. In the fearful struggle between virtue and vice, notwithstanding the powerful auxiliaries which wickedness finds in the bosoms of men, and in the seductions and influence of popular example, wherever the Sabbath has been suffered to live, the trembling interests of moral virtue have always been revered and sustained. One of the principal occupations of this day is to illustrate and enforce the great principles of sound morality. Where this sacred rest is preserved inviolate you behold a nation convened one day in seven for the purpose of acquainting themselves with the best moral principles and precepts. And it cannot be otherwise than that the authority of moral virtue, under such auspices, should be acknowledged and felt. We may not at once perceive the effects which this weekly observance produces. Like most moral causes, it operates slowly; but it operates surely, and gradually weakens the power and breaks the yoke of profligacy and sin. No villain regards the Sabbath. No vicious family regards the Sabbath. No immoral community regards the Sabbath. The holy rest of this ever-memorable day is a barrier which is always broken down before men become giants in sin. Blackstone, in his 'Commentaries on the laws of England,' remarks, that "A corruption of morals usually follows a profanation of the Sabbath." It is an observation of Lord Chief Justice Hale, that "Of all the persons who were convicted of capital crimes while he was upon the bench, he found a few only who would not confess, on enquiry, that they began their career of wickedness by a neglect of the duties of the Sabbath, and vicious conduct on that day." The prisons in our own land could probably tell us that they have scarcely a solitary tenant who had not broken over the restraints of the Sabbath before he was abandoned to crime. You may enact laws for the suppression of immorality; but the sacred and silent power of the Sabbath constitutes a stronger shield to the vital interests of the community than any code of penal statutes that ever was enacted. The Sabbath is the key-stone of the Temple of Virtue, which, however defaced, will survive many a rude shock so long as this foundation remains firm.

The Sabbath may also be regarded as a distinguished means

of national prosperity. The God of heaven hath said, "Them that honour me I will honour." You will not often find a notorious Sabbath-breaker a permanently prosperous man. A Sabbath-breaking community is never a prosperous, happy community. Such a man, such a community provokes the displeasure of God and draws down his judgments. When the Athenians recalled their celebrated general Alcibiades from an important expedition, it was because the night before his departure he had cast public reproach and contempt on the gods of his country. "If thou turn away thy foot," said the God of the Hebrews, "if thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father." Elsewhere he says, "If ye will diligently hearken unto me, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath-day, but hallow the Sabbath-day to do no work therein; then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and this city shall remain for ever." There are a multitude of unobserved influences which the Sabbath exerts upon the temporal welfare of men. It promotes the spirit of good order and harmony; it elevates the poor from want; it transforms squalid wretchedness; it imparts self-respect and elevation of character; it promotes softness and civility of manners; it brings together the rich and the poor upon one common level in the house of prayer; it purifies and strengthens the social affections, and makes the family circle the centre of allurement and the source of instruction, comfort, and happiness. Like its own divine religion, it "has the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come." I see not how men can afford to dispense with the Sabbath, whatever their condition in the world. It is said that a late distinguished statesman, when travelling over New England, and observing her

every where scattered churches, and the order and decency of her Sabbaths, remarked with emphasis, "I never beheld such a community before. This is the glory of New England." No statesman of enlarged and comprehensive views can deny the benevolent influence of the Sabbath. When the influence of this sacred rest comes to be extended from shore to shore; when its temples crown every hill and are the ornament of every valley; when its supplications and hallowed songs are heard from ten thousand times ten thousand assemblies of worshippers; who can doubt that its weekly return to this wide world will be entertained as "angels' visits," though neither "few" nor "far between." Who can doubt that those divine judgments which so often complete the ruin of a people would be mitigated and withdrawn? There is a beautiful representation of this thought by a far-famed though eccentric orator, which it is impossible for me to give, except very imperfectly, because I do it only from memory. The city of London contains about a thousand churches. "When I approach the city of London," said the late John Randolph, "I sometimes feel that I am approaching a place devoted to destruction. The cry of its abominations goes up to heaven; and I seem to see the tempest gathering over it. But then again, I look at her thousand spires that penetrate the clouds, and see them conducting off its fury."

There is another consideration of still weightier import which I may not suppress. The Sabbath is the great means of perpetuating the knowledge of the true religion. Few persons, if any, are universal sceptics. All nations have some religious impressions, be they ever so erroneous. The Sabbath was originally instituted by God in commemoration of his own existence as the Creator of the world, and for the purpose of being a perpetual testimony against the worship of idols. It was subsequently instituted in commemoration of the deliverance of the nation of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, and as a token of their vocation as his chosen people. "Surely my Sabbaths ye shall keep, for it is a sign between me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord who hath sanctified you." Subsequently the observance of it was enforced as a commemora-

tion of the resurrection of the Savour. The Patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian Sabbath all unite in the same design, and are now all concentrated in the last named day. This day commemorates the three great facts that distinguish the true religion from paganism, the church from the world, and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ to the exclusion of every other way. The mere existence of this day is a public proof of these three facts. If these three facts—the creation of the world—the calling of the Hebrew nation as God's peculiar people—and the resurrection of the Saviour, can be established; the religion that is founded upon them must be of divine origin. Now the weekly observance of this day of rest transmits these facts through all the generations of men. It is a sign between God and man, recurring every week. Just as coins and pillars and monuments, and the festal days which commemorate some remarkable epoch in a nation's history, are signs and proofs of the events they commemorate, so is the Sabbath a standing public proof of these great facts. We should never have heard of the Sabbath but for the events which it commemorates. When we speak of it, we recur to the reasons of its original institution. When our children enquire why it is set apart, we tell them; and when their children make the same enquiry, they have the same answer; and in that answer have an epitome of the evidence in favour of the only true religion. Wherever this day of rest is duly observed, therefore, it is the great preservative against idolatry, polytheism, and all false religions. Wherever it is observed, there, and there only is to be found the knowledge of the one only living and true God, of the existence of his church on the earth, and of her salvation through the great Mediator. But for this testimony, we see not how the knowledge of the true religion would have been preserved in the earth. If you find a people strangers to the Sabbath, you may be confident they are without God in the world. When France abolished the Sabbath, she declared there was no God but reason, and no hereafter. You may wander at the present day over the far-famed cemetery of her metropolis, and read the numerous inscriptions upon tombstones erected at that melancholy period, DEATH IS AN

ETERNAL SLEEP! The same result will follow wherever the same experiment shall be made. The nation that disowns the Sabbath is necessarily a nation of infidels and atheists. Look where you will, either among individuals, families, or communities, and if the Sabbath is a desolation, there you will find a gradual and certain decay from true religion to infidelity and paganism. Let the Sabbath be forgotten for twenty years in this favoured land, and you will have no necessity of going to India or the Southern Ocean to find paganism, for we ourselves should have become a natian of pagans. Blot out the Sabbath and no longer will the Bible lead men to repentance and salvation. No longer will the silver clarion of the Gospel "proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound." No longer will the voice of supplication ascend from this ruined world to draw from heaven the blessings bestowed by the hearer of prayer. No longer will the Spirit of truth and grace dwell with men, to dissipate their darkness, and make the desert like Eden and the wilderness like the garden of the Lord. No longer will ordinances quicken, or the soul be comforted, or mercy be triumphant. Darkness will cover the earth and gross darkness the people. Sin will reign. Satan, the great enemy of God and man, will lay waste this fair creation; will walk to and fro through the earth in all the frenzy of his long-wished-for usurpation, and death and hell will follow in his train.

May we not then affirm the obligations of the world to the Bible for its Sabbath? As a man of the world I venerate the Sabbath. I would not be the agent in the destruction of this day of rest for all that earth can give. It would indeed have little to bestow when all that is illuminating and pure, elevating and noble, serene and holy, have become thus exiled from among men. That man has lived too long who has survived the extinction of the Sabbath. My young friends, does not this day of light and mercy and hope deserve respect? Does it bear no stamp of divinity? The great Lord of the Sabbath bids you rest on that sacred day. On that sacred day he bids "reason which, amid the bustle of the week has been jostled from her throne, resume her sway. He calls conscience from

the retirement into which she had been driven by the spirit of gain or the strife of party." And he awakes all the tenderness of the heart, touches its sympathies, and opens it to the sweet influences of his love. Never does the world of nature more delightfully co-operate with the world of grace than on this sacred day. Never does the dew fall in sweeter silence, nor the vapour ascend more softly. Never does the kingdom of providence smile more significantly than on the observance, or frown more fearfully than on the violations of this day of rest. No man is the loser by keeping this day holy. O it is enough to sicken one's heart to survey the immoralities that are engendered by the neglect and abuse of this day! Among the causes which diminish the appropriate influence of the Sabbath in this land are the rapid growth of our large cities, the influx of a foreign population from Catholic countries, the limited extension of the Christian ministry, the cupidity of monied and business corporations, the example of the rich, the influence of the government, the want of parental authority, the thoughtlessness of young men, and the desecration of the day by many of the professed people of God. And yet as a nation I cannot feel that we are a community of Sabbath-breakers. With the single and melancholy exception of the post-office department, the public departments of business are all closed on this sacred day. The custom house, the banks, the insurance offices, the public offices at the seat of government, the courts of justice, the mercantile houses, the shops of business and labour are closed one day in seven. And well may we feel that this is an unspeakable blessing. It would be an insupportable grief and burden were it otherwise. And yet is the sin of Sabbath-breaking becoming more and more apparent in the land. Notwithstanding the strong barriers erected to protect this sacred observance, there is reason to fear that the irresistible flood of business and pleasure will roll over this great institution. On the behalf of this holy day therefore, I solicit your example and your influence wherever you may be, and as long as you shall live. It is entitled to your reverence and love. You have nothing you can substitute in its place. Despise its guidance, reject its consolations, refuse its hopes, extinguish its light, and

you are buried in cheerless gloom. If you would that those who come after you should rise up and call you blessed; if you would embalm your names in the grateful remembrance of coming generations; continue the exemplary and fearless guardians of the Christian Sabbath, and transmit its blessings to distant futurity. On you devolves the sacred charge of extending and perpetuating the unappreciated blessings of this holy day. Should older men become demoralized; should grave Senators trample on this institution of heaven's wisdom and mercy; there is a redeeming spirit in the young. I repeat the thought, let it be one of the great principles of your conduct, wherever and whatever you may be, to uphold the authority and plead the cause of this holy institution. Let no change of condition, or place, or pressure of business tempt you to profane the Sabbath. No one external observance will exert so powerful an influence on your moral character as a scrupulous and cheerful regard to the Lord's day. You cannot become abandoned while you revere the Sabbath. You cannot become useless members of society so long as you regard the Sabbath. You cannot put yourselves beyond the reach of hope and heaven so long as you treasure up this one command, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy."

LECTURE XIII.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE ON HUMAN HAPPINESS.

THE Bible possesses an unmeasured pre-eminence in the influence it exerts in promoting human happiness. If the world is indebted to a supernatural revelation for its language and its letters; for its history and its literature; for its laws and its liberties; for its social institutions and the mitigation of its more public calamities; for its morality and religious knowledge; for a religion that satisfies the conscience, renovates the heart, and fits the soul for heaven; for a standard of excellence and loftiness of character, to which it otherwise must have been a stranger; for the divine power which accompanies its truths, as well as for the benign and hallowed influences of its day of rest; then has the great Book of which we have spoken conferred unspeakably greater benefits on the world than any other—nay, than all other books. But I do not purpose to illustrate the leading thought of the present lecture, by recapitulating the substance of that which has already, I fear, been too greatly extended.

Some of the ancients, indeed, endeavoured to form the mind to virtue, but it was a virtue based on interest, or a vain love of approbation. The "honestum," or "το καλον" of the Greek and Roman philosophers is defined by Aristotle to be that which is praiseworthy; and by Plato that which is pleasant or profitable. Their virtue had no broader foundation than the hopes and desires of the present life. Some of them appeared to have a wish to benefit their fellow-men, and to be in earnest in their researches after the truth. To such minds, what a relief would the perusal of this Book have afforded, while it clearly disclosed that for which they had so long been seeking, and enabled them to exchange the distant glimpses

they had obtained, for the full light revealed in lines that could leave no doubt of their heavenly origin! How would they, had they been taught of God, thrown their poor speculations to the winds, and recognized the virtue for which they had so anxiously sighed, in the divine precepts! But it was not granted them. They lived in error and darkness, for the day-spring from on high had not yet arisen upon their land.

Sinful emotions are the source of disquietude, dissatisfaction, remorse, and misery. Envy and unkindness, suspicion and jealousy, lawless appetites, malignant and stormy passions, infuriated rage, reciprocated treachery, mutual crimination and bitterness,—what so much as these distract the heart and dry up its joys? There is nothing that can make such a mind happy. Perturbed and unhallowed affections form no inconsiderable part of the misery of that world where the worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. Angels could not be happy in heaven when their bosoms became such a "troubled sea" as this. Our first parents must be doomed to a life of toil, to a world of thorny care and the grave when they yielded to such a spirit. Ahab, on the throne of Israel, "refuses to eat bread," because he could not possess himself of the vineyard of Naboth. Haman, in high favour at the court of Persia, makes himself miserable because "Mordecai the Jew sat at the king's gate." Who can feel himself at peace when such passions reign in the soul; and where is the bosom in which they may not be found, unless it has been purified by the power of the Gospel? Wealth, pleasure, and fame, are the three idols of this world, and the love of these the predominant passions of the heart. And yet they are the most contentious, mischievous, debasing passions, and the most prolific source of individual, social, and public calamity. Vanity and ostentation without are very apt to be the index of poverty and wretchedness within. The rich, the voluptuous, the ambitious, the great, are not the men who are happy. Marcus Crassus antedating his fall by grasping at the wealth of Parthia, Tiberius concealing his cruelty and lust amid the retreats of Capræa, and Alexander on the throne of the world, weeping because there was not another world to conquer,

are melancholy proofs, that amid joys like these, and in the highest gratification of the unhallowed passions which this world can furnish, men not only never can be happy, but may and must be miserable.

There is nothing that allays and cures this febrile action of human depravity like the influence of the Bible. Let any one compare the present state of human society, notwithanding all its imperfections, with its true character only a few centuries past, and he cannot fail to see how many exciting causes of human misery it has subdued; how many a heart it has kept from acting out, and giving unrestrained licence to its irritated selfishness; how often it has held the fierce passions of men in check, and extinguished the flame which otherwise would have burned with indomitable phrenzy. Affections that are bland and virtuous are uniformly the source of tranquillity and joy. They are like "rivers of water in a dry place." They are living fountains within, sprining up to purify and refresh the mind. The Bible alone tells us in what true happiness consists, and how it may be attained. It is not without reason that it admonishes us of the danger of mere earthly comforts, because the very desire after them is ordinarily so intense as to become the source of inward corruption, and in their enjoyment we forget our highest good. I have been not a little interested in the fact, that the Saviour, at the commencement of his public ministry, and in the first paragraph of his first discourse, should have so entirely countervailed the commonly received notions of men, in regard to the sources of true happiness. He who formed the human mind is acquainted with its large desires, and is familiar with every avenue of its joys, has said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are they that mourn; blessed are the meek; blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." What a rebuke to the spirit of this world! What a contrast to the restless solicitude of grasping covetousness; to the dissipation of the gay; to the resentment of the implacable; to the degradation of the impure; and to those senseless joys of ambition, when some new flame ignites its hopes to quench them

in darkness! The Bible distinctly teaches us, that he is the happiest man who possesses most of its peculiar spirit and character. Not because he has the most wealth, for he may be poor, and, like his Divine Master, "have not where to lay his head." Not because "he seeks honour from men," but because he seeks that which cometh from God only." Not because he is a voluptuary, but a Christian. Not because he has the greatest capacity, but because he possesses an internal spirit, a state of mind and heart which prepare him to appreciate, and qualify him to enjoy all that is worth enjoying, and to a degree that is impossible to a mind less pure. "To the upright, there ariseth light in the midst of darkness." In the gloomiest wilderness, he has a guide that accompanies and cheers him with encouragement. No danger can appal him, no sorrow crush, no doubt depress him. Darkness becomes day, the bitterest flower yields him honey, seeming evil turns to certain good. He utters no complaint, because he knows his lot is so much better than he deserves; he yields not to fear, for he is well assured that by a thousand contrasts and combinations, "all things work together for good to them that love God." Others he sees travelling a gayer road, faring sumptuously, arrayed in rich apparel; but he does not repine, does not envy them. He is content that his path should be through the desert, and over the rough places, so that he has peace and joy within. One of the unfailing sources of happiness, for which we are indebted to the Scriptures, is the spirit and character which it requires and imparts.

Man is formed for activity. Exertion is the true element of a well regulated mind. If undisturbed by the implements of husbandry, the soil becomes hard and impenetrable. Its bosom is not open to the dew or rain, or to the vivifying influence of the sun. The scattered seed finds no root, but is driven by every wind that blows over the surface. No verdure is seen to greet the eye, or tree bearing fruit to cheer the cheerless husbandman; but weeds, rank and dangerous to man, spring up from the soil that was destined for his support and comfort. So it is with the mind of man when locked up and deprived of healthful exertion he lives for himself alone, and only the most

sordid passions spring up within his bosom. Benevolence has no room in a soul so narrow; compassion and sympathy are stifled, and all the nobler faculties languish. Almost the only relief from unmingled misery in the indulgence of some of the evil propensities of our nature is found in the fact that they produce excitement and incite to exertion. That God who brings good out of evil has so ordered it that in giving rise to action and effort, even these propensities produce no small amount of good, though aiming at a very different end. Avarice and love of wealth set commerce in motion, provide labour and sustenance for the poor, bring the ends of the earth near to each other, and spread abroad civilization and Christianity. The heathen of the isles and of this continent might still have been unknown, still deprived of the blessings of the Gospel, had not the ambitious spirit of adventure quickened the ingenuity and winged the sails of the navigator. The love of fame may be the only motive that inspires the tongue of the orator and the pen of the writer; but God gives them a destiny different from what they proposed to themselves. Their names may be lost amid the rushing whirlpool of time; but their words and their works may break the chains of nations, carry intelligence over the face of the earth, and their influence felt throughout eternity. Mankind in this respect may not be unaptly compared to the alchymists of old, who spent their lives in laborious search after the fabled philosopher's stone. Their unwearied industry failed of success, for it was directed toward an object that was unattainable; yet, though misapplied, it was not, as subsequent events have shown, without its source of happiness to themselves, and benefit to the world.

If then action in itself considered is a source of happiness and a benefit to mankind, how much more when it is founded on intelligent and benevolent principles? Few sources of pleasure equal those which arise from benevolent exertion. When intelligent and benevolent principles stimulate it to action, then it is that the soul is enlarged and elevated, and the bosom opened to every kindly influence. Benevolence and well doing become their own reward, and inducements to future efforts. The seed sown in such a soil brings forth fruit an hundred

fold; and a rich harvest in the happiness of others adds to the already abundant store of our own. But whence are intelligent and benevolent principles of action to be derived? Does nature dictate them? Have they been discovered by reason? Are they found amid the researches of philosophy? Are they gathered from observation? Spring they up even from dear bought experience? What is more obvious than that the world needs a supernatural revelation, if for nothing else than to discover the true aim and end of man's existence? It is a remark of Cicero, that "those who do not agree in stating what is the chief end, or good, must of course differ in the whole system of precepts for the conduct of human life." And yet this writer informs us, that on this subject "there was so great a dissension among the philosophers, that it was almost impossible to enumerate their different sentiments." And hence it is that men of pagan lands so rarely even professed to put forth their exertions for a benevolent end, and knew so little of the happiness arising from such an exalted source. Great exertions from great motives constitute the glory and blessedness of our nature. And no where do we learn what great exertions and great motives are but from the Bible. The wisdom to guide, and the aliment to sustain them, are derived only from that great source of instruction and duty. Where on all the pages of pagan and infidel philosophy do we read such an injunction as this,—"Whether therefore ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God." Whence but from that sacred Book do we learn the maxim, so familiar to every Christian mind, "None of us liveth to himself, and none of us dieth to himself; but whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord!" He, and he alone, is the happy man, who has been taught to consider the nature and tendency of his conduct, and whether it will approve itself to God, and advance the designs of his truth and love in the world; who makes his will the rule, and his glory the end; and whose governing aim and study are to please him, and show forth his praise. Such a man is happy, because he lives to do good. His daily employment is his daily joy. His "meat is to do the will of Him that sent him, and finish his

work. He may be as great a sufferer as Paul, and yet as happy as he. He cannot be miserable so long as he acts from the principle of communicative goodness. No matter where his particular sphere of occupation, he is happy. His aim is high, and he has an object which sustains, and an impulse which encourages him. His anticipations are joyous, his reflections tranquil. He looks backward with pleasure, and forward with hope. He has the joy of an approving conscience. He has not buried his talent, nor is he a cumberer of the ground. He lives to bless the world. And when he dies, he bequeaths to it his counsels, his example, his bounty, and his prayers. Another source of enjoyment for which we are indebted to the Bible therefore is the habit of benevolent exertion.

It is in vain to turn our eyes from the sad spectacle of human misery. We cannot persuade ourselves that it does not exist, nor arm ourselves with a stoical insensibility to evils which are every where around us, and which we ourselves feel. If you open your eyes upon the annals of time, you see an unbroken series of existencies who appear for a few days, or hours, on this scene of action, and then pass away. The cradle is suffused with their tears, and, in a little while, the places that so lately knew them, are hung around with the emblems of their dissolution. And between the cradle and the grave, what mournful scenes fill up the drama of human life! What hours of sadness and gloom! What painful diseases, what disheartening discouragements, what disappointments and losses; what defeated hopes and withered honours; what depression and melancholy; what malignity of enemies and fickleness of friends; what unkindness, darkness, and fear; what individual and domestic calamity, and public distress; what consternation and dismay; all heightened and aggravated by the distressing doubt and uncertainty as to what shall be on the morrow! Trials like these befall us at every step through life. No hour can we be free from the fear that what we value most on earth may be snatched from us. In this respect, man seems subjected to a severer sentence than the rest of the natural world, and the curse of death falls with a heavier weight upon him. The trees and plants grow up to their full height,

fill up the measure of their years, and then decay and fall. Flowers bloom through their passing life, and then wither and die according to the laws of their nature. Birds and beasts live, for the most part, until age creeps upon them, and, unless they are destroyed by the hand of man, are rarely cut off by disease. The brute creation have no thought, no fear of evil. Their life is not embittered by the expectation that they must die; they have no knowledge beyond the present and the past; their hopes and their fears gather nothing from their experience which may reveal to them the morrow; but they live in contented ignorance and apathy, and at death sink into the deep, never-ending night of annihilation.

But it is not so with man. Man perishes from the cradle to the grave; and "suffers a thousand deaths in fearing one." He alone is aware of the dangers that threaten him, and they are every where about his path. "Man dieth and wasteth away, yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" Who has not sympathized with the Persian poet when he said,

> "I passed the burying-place, and wept sorely,
> To think how many of my fr ends were in the mansions of the dead.
> And in an agony of grief, I cried out, *Where are they?*
> And Echo gave the answer, nd said, *Where are they?*

How often do we grieve over the destruction of our fondest hopes? When heart is bound up in heart, how oft is the tie rent suddenly asunder, the sweetest fellowships severed, and the joys of the happiest life vailed by the gloom of the grave. Life and death seem to walk hand in hand; and even while we are rejoicing in the presence of the one, comes his stern companion and casts a blight upon our prospects. Amid those very scenes where we have witnessed the joyful career of one we love, we are called to behold him pine in sickness and suffer in death. The hand which has performed for us so many acts of kindness, is now reached out to us for aid that we cannot give; and the voice whose tones were such music to the ear can now scarcely be heard, or heard only in sounds of distress. All which formerly made the delight of our hearts, now makes up their anguish. And if in hope of soothing their dying pillow, we summon strength, and stand by to receive

the last sigh, to return the last weak pressure of the hand, to watch the advance of death as he steals from the cold limbs and brow to the heart, and freezes there the feeble current of life, and then gaze upon the lifeless form for another breath, another motion, which alas! we shall not hear, nor see; we feel, for the moment, as though this grief, this overwhelming sorrow, could not be supported. When, too, after the first hour of anguish is past, and we return to that cold clay to put it in order for the tomb, to look still again upon its changed lineaments, and to feel that it was but yesterday and there was a bloom upon this cheek, a lustre in this eye, a voice upon these lips; we are mourners afresh—we are silent—the sad picture is all before us!

Seal up this sacred volume, and I see not whence the light dawns to cheer this sombre picture. But for the Bible, man would be placed in a grade of happiness far below the brutes that perish. Better be any thing than rational without the religion of the Bible. The Scriptures inform me that these evils have a cause. They all come from the hand of God. "I make peace, I create evil, I the Lord do all these things." Chance and fate have no place in the government of "the God only wise." Sorrow is designed; nor is the design malignant or unkind. The unseen hand that inflicts these trials is as benevolent as it is wise, and the Being who dispenses them is as far above all other beings in goodness as he is in power. We learn from the Bible too, that they have a moral cause; that they are the rebuke of the Holy One for our iniquity; that they are the discipline of a heavenly parent, and designed to bring back his wayward children to their forsaken God. And when rebellious man sees and feels this truth, his soul is subdued to submission, to tranquillity, to peace, and under the heaviest calamity he looks upward and says, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good!" And this of itself is the source of abounding consolations. How often in our intercourse with mankind do we cheerfully submit to present pain and evil, when counselled to it by those in whose wisdom and benevolence we have confidence. Extend this principle, so often and so beautifully illustrated in the word of God, to all the evils of

the present life, and we have that feeling of quiet, trusting confidence which supports the believer under all the evils which an all-wise Father is pleased to lay upon him. It is a principle prolific in consolations to the mourner; and well may be the confidence and joy of the world and of the universe. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof."

And what shall we say of the hopes and prospects by which the Bible cheers the hearts of the bereaved? What rather may we not say? Is it blind conjecture which the Scriptures reveal respecting the state of departed man? Is there no life to come? no great resurrection? no comforter to arrest the current of "mourning, lamentation, and wo," after the dust we love has been deposited in the tomb? When reminded keenly of our loss we exclaim, shall we not meet again? Is this parting forever?—is there nothing in the Bible that can answer the agonizing enquiry? When we wander as it were along the borders of that vast ocean which has swallowed up our living treasures; when we sit down there, and weep and call upon the waves of eternity to give up their dead; when from the shore of time, we look and listen over the vast abyss of waters, does no sound reach us? To the ear of faith there is a voice. We listen, and our grief is allayed. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." They do but "sleep." They "sleep in Jesus." Death dissolves not their union with him. Yes, our grief is allayed, and we journey on through life consoled. No longer now do our thoughts wander to that mound of earth where their remains have been deposited. We look upward beyond this sphere. A happy meeting, a reunion for eternity hovers before us like a star, illumines our path, and leads us forward in joyful hope.

No where does the Bible look with cold indifference on human misery. So adapted is it to human sorrows, that its precious counsels and promises are scarcely intelligible, and never appreciated except by those who are "chosen in the furnace of affliction." Go up with me to that chamber of sorrow. It is not the dwelling of a pagan. It is not the couch of some

deluded disciple of Mahomet. Nor yet is it the abode of a mere nominal Christian. "This I know by experience," said she, "the days of ease and worldly prosperity are seldom to Christians their better days. So far from it, that, to the praise and glory of God's holy name would I speak it, I have substantial reason to call these my better days—these days and nights of pain—these days of almost absolute confinement and solitude are not only my better but my best days; because the Saviour condescends to be more present with me in them; to manifest himself to me as he does not unto the world; to stand by my bed of affliction, and speak kindly to my heart."[1] O how dark are the shadows which human reason and vain philosophy cast upon such scenes as these! There is no such relief from sorrow as found in the Bible.

I have spoken of the consolations furnished by the Bible in trial and in view of the death of others. But we must penetrate yet deeper sorrows than these. There is an hour when we ourselves must die. If we find death an evil when we mark its advances upon those around us, what will it be when he comes up into our own chambers? Who can trifle with this monster then? When he invades our own pillow, which of us will not recoil from his approach, and shrink from the ravages of this king of terrors? "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." Death is an hour which never fails to bring with it the consciousness of guilt, and a sense of the righteousness of that pure and holy law which men have violated, and by which they are condemned. Nor is there anything to quiet the apprehensions and soothe the alarm excited in the breasts of those who know not God, at the approach of this dread destroyer. Men who never drank into the spirit of the Bible feel then that everything on which they built their hopes is about to be swept away, and that, "in that very day," their thoughts, their treasures, their grandeur, their honours, their little world, all perish. They have lived at a distance from that God who now draws near in his displeasure, and tremble at the thought of appearing before him who is so holy that he cannot look on sin. No

[1] Life of Mrs. Hawkes.

knowledge of the Redeemer's person and work comforts them; no welcome impressions of his saving mercy are left upon the soul, and it departs in doubt and darkness, if not in despair. So full of darkness were the views of Socrates, one of the wisest and best of the heathens, that just before he took the fatal hemlock, he said, "I am going out of the world and you are to continue in it; but which of us has the better part is a secret to every one but God." Volumes might be written depicting the scenes of anguish and horror which have been exhibited at the death-bed of those who have rejected the Bible. What multitudes of dying men, burdened with the load of unpardoned sin, and tormented by the accusations of a guilty conscience, have exclaimed with one with whose closing history many of you are familiar, "O that I might come to that place of torment, that I may be sure to feel the worst, and to be freed from the fear of worse to come!"

Not so the dying Christian. To him death has no sting; over him the grave boasts no victory; nor has the second death any power. "He knows whom he has believed." His "life is hid with Christ in God." He has unshaken confidence that every thing is safe in the hands of Jesus Christ. Often have I seen him at that momentous hour, and heard him as his quivering lips commended his spirit to "Him who loved him, and washed him in his own blood." Time would fail me to tell of Ignatius, of Polycarp, of Augustine, of Hilary, of John Huss, of Jerome of Prague, of Luther, of Melancthon, of Beza, of Patrick Hamilton, of George Wishart, of John Knox, of Tindal, of Bradford, of Cranmer, of Bunyan, of Bacon, of Robert Bruce, of Samuel Rutherford, of Claud, of Harvey, of Ralph Erskine, of Locke, of Baxter, of Matthew Henry, of Whitefield, of Edwards, of Brainerd, Dwight, Halyburton, Payson, Evarts, and a host of men of whom the world was not worthy, all of whom "died in faith," and sung the songs of salvation as they bade adieu to their earthly pilgrimage. The history of the Church is filled with testimonials to the worth and blessedness of the Bible which have flowed from lips which, though pallid in death, have glowed with praise. What but this Book of God enables the child of faith, "when flesh and

heart fail," to say, "Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore!" What but this prompts him to sing, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day, and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing"? What but this book of consolations, when death's icy hands chill his frame, and the grave unfolds its darkness and solitude, inspires the triumph, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Not more distant are our thoughts from the thoughts of God, or earth from heaven, than are all the consolations of reason and philosophy from the consolations of the Bible to a dying man.

There is one more topic which gives emphasis to the thought which I am endeavouring to illustrate, which I wish it were in my power to present in its native force and richness. *The source and fulness of created good is* THE KNOWLEDGE AND ENJOYMENT OF GOD.

> "Give what thou wilt, without thee we are poor,
> And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away."

The mind of man is like a ship which the storm has dragged from her moorings and driven out to sea. It is tossed upon unknown waves, and has neither peace nor safety until it can renew its communication with the shore. No sooner did it apostatize from God than it was torn from its proper element, and separated from its proper object. Without the knowledge of God, mankind are like children deprived of a father, driven along, the sport of accident, with no hope for the future, and no security that their present happiness would endure, or their present misery end. Darkness would overshadow their path from the cradle to the grave. Admit, for the sake of the illustration, that our race were deprived at once of all knowledge of God, where would be those hopes which support man in the gloomy hours of adversity, where that gratitude and love that

lend such a zest to his hours of joy! What sadness would reign over the world! what unalleviated despair! Or, if we might extend this melancholy picture, if the imagination might carry us beyond this earth to a universe ignorant of its Maker, O what a chasm to strike the Infinite One out of existence! Then should we see, in their once happy spheres, the angels sitting apart and weeping that they had no God; or behold them flying through infinite space, winging their way through the mazes of the whirling planets, and seeking some token of the Father they had lost, and, as they met, saying to one another, Is it so? Have we no God—no Father? No, we have no God! And with boundless grief and despair they would wing their way farther and farther through the universe. Then would every harp be unstrung, every song silent, and the despairing words, we have no God—no Father—a blind chance rules—be all that would break the awful silence of heaven. In one dismal region these sounds might perhaps bring some joy. Fiends might triumph—might laugh and exclaim, Heard ye there is no God—there is no heaven? This universe is now one boundless place of torment! Then let it be supposed that to this despairing world the news should be brought that God still ruled. Let the note peal as from a trumpet through the universe, "He lives, he reigns;"—and what transport would fill the earth and the heavens! Then would the child of sorrow lift his head from the dust to his Father who is in heaven. Angels would string again their harps, and re-echo the tidings, —"He lives, he reigns God over all, blessed for ever!"—The triumph of fiends would be turned into shame, and hell resume her ancient gloom and despair.

We are not competent to appreciate the effect, were the knowledge of God blotted out of the universe. There was a moment when the only created mind fully capable of comprehending the fearful thought seemed to feel it as an insupportable reality. And who can tell the feelings of that mighty mind at that awful moment when God hid his face from him, and the suffering Son looked up in vain, and exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" Nearly such would be the condition of this world without the Bible. The

Bible alone points the exile to his native land. It conducts the wandering thirsty traveller to the very fountain of life. It leads the long-lost spirit back to God.

But besides the support and hope which the knowledge of God procures, unspeakably greater is the pleasure we derive from loving him. What greater blessing has heaven bestowed upon the human race than pure and amiable affections? Of all men he is the most miserable who has nothing to love. His heart is cold, and his bosom like the desolate hearth. Nor is there any thing that can revive and refresh his withered mind until he has found an object on which to bestow his affections. No small portion of our happiness in this world arises from the love we feel toward those who are dear to us. We may indeed have affections that are not virtuous; but the pleasures we derive from them do not deserve the name. We may love what is unworthy, inconstant, and changeful; and then our expectations are defeated. We may love what is transient and dying; and then our joys are turned into grief. And yet, with all its fickleness and uncertainty, earth furnishes no such happiness as where heart yearns toward its fellow heart. In so far as their characters are faulty, the pleasure of our love it is true is in proportion diminished; and yet with all their blemishes, the loss of their affections could not be easily repaired. But suppose those we love are exalted beyond their fellow-men, endowed with an amiable and generous mind, gifted with a strength of intellect and purpose that are softened by benevolence and condescension, and over all these qualities a winning manner throws its attractive charms; what delight do we experience in affectionate intercourse with them. We feel as it were almost raised to their level, and enjoy a pride and gratification that we are esteemed worthy of their love. And this thought elevates us indeed, and keeps us above the level of the common world. And how careful are we to do nothing to forfeit their confidence, and what grief and self-reproach do we feel if we have forfeited it; for conscience tells us that the folly, the error is all our own. What then must be the happiness of fixing the heart on God, where there is nothing unlovely, nothing fickle, nothing false or dying! From

our best affections toward creatures up to the love of God, there is a height as lofty as his ways and attributes are above the attributes and ways of mortals. No fear can haunt the mind, that he may change in his character, or in his love. He is above the reach of accident, or mutation, perfect in benevolence and power, and to those who trust in him is a sure and perpetually increasing source of joy. Men no longer grasp at shadows when they fix their hearts on God. They think of him, and are happy; they contemplate his nature, and their best affections and purest happiness become more exalted and more pure, the greater their love. Solicitude subsides into tranquillity, peace is invigorated to confidence, love awakes to joy, and not unfrequently joy to transport, at a view of the divine excellence and glory. And then to receive love for love; to lean on the bosom of divine faithfulness; to make the Eternal God our refuge and portion—this is the blessedness for which the spiritual nature of man is formed. This is that great law of moral attraction by which the soul enjoys even a sort of sympathy with the divine nature and participates in his blessedness.

The world has no substitute for such a source of joy. You may be happy, my young friends, without power, without influence, without learning, without wealth; but you cannot be happy without God. Give man all of this world that he desires; multiply around him the gratifications of sense and the pleasures of thought; and if he have not God for his refuge and joy, the day is not far distant when he will feel that he is like the prodigal in a far country, feeding upon husks and clothing himself with rags. Nothing can make you miserable so long as you enjoy the presence of God. To feel every where surrounded with Deity; to see him every where, and every where enjoy him—this is the blessedness which the Bible is capable of imparting. Nothing separates such a mind "from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus his Lord." This "green earth" may be parched up, and all its sources of pleasure dried away; but such a mind ranges more delectable mountains, and quenches the ardour of its desires at fountains of living water. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters; he restoreth my soul."

Such is the influence of this holy book on human happiness. No matter where or on whom its blessings descend, its legitimate influence is to make men happy. Wherever it finds him on this vast sea of trouble, however far from land, however shattered by the storm, it fills the torn sails of the tempest-tost, and wafts him to the shore. Nay, it calms the tempest. The voice of the waves is hushed by its power, and the heaving ocean is stilled in a peaceful haven.

"Chose admirable," exclaims the great Montesquieu, "la religion Chrétienne, qui ne semble avoir d'objet que la felicite de l'autre vie, fait encore notre bonheur dans celle-ci." Higher authority has said, "Godliness is profitable for all things; having the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come." There are few errors more to be regretted than that the religion of the Bible is not adapted to promote human happiness. Its very sacrifices have more than an adequate compensation. If it commands us to give up self, it is only for the love of God; if it teaches us to give up time, it gives us eternity in return; and in doing this, it does not even diminish our happiness in time. It is a reproach to Christianity that its disciples are not more uniformly cheerful and happy. The religion of the Bible is not a cheerless religion. Unhappy Christians there are, but unhappy religion there is none. God grant, my young friends, that you may possess an humble piety, a self-denying, laborious piety, a piety that lives above the world and walks with God, but at the same time, a cheerful, happy piety.

LECTURE XIV.

CONCLUSION.

WE have been considering, in the preceding lectures, some of the particulars in which the world is under obligations to the Bible. I would cheerfully extend this discussion did I not believe that a more protracted illustration would be an unseasonable demand upon the patience of my audience. It was my design to have detained you by the consideration of one other topic, and to have shown the obligations of men to the Bible for a religion that satisfies the conscience when it is roused to that great enquiry, "How shall man be just with God?" But as this topic has more than once been incidentally alluded to, and to some extent illustrated, I pass this evening to the concluding lecture.

The design of this exercise is to request you, without any particular recapitulation on my part, to review the ground we have gone over, and in this review to institute the following enquiries:—

IS NOT THE RELIGION OF THE BIBLE UNIVERSALLY ADAPTED TO THE CHARACTER AND CONDITION OF OUR RACE? Whatever may be the varieties of his locality and condition, every individual of the human family is, by nature, ignorant, depraved, subject to infirmities and sorrows, destined to the grave, and the heir of immortality. The religion which he needs, and which alone is adapted to all the varieties of his species, and all the peculiarities of his condition, is one that meets the exigencies of his condition for both worlds. It is one which, while it appreciates the importance of the life which is to come, does not depreciate the true interests of the life that now is. It is one which, while it does not overlook his intellectual worth, and his social and public relations; his freedom, his dignity, his happiness, his usefulness as a citizen of this world; provides mainly for his moral purity,

and the glory and immortality that await him at the termination of his earthly career. It is one which consults the claims, not of one class of human society merely, but of all classes; not of one period of time merely, but of all periods; not of one clime merely, but of all climes; not of one form of government merely, but of all forms of government; not of one locality, or a limited circle, but of all localities, and the most enlarged circle; not of one particular nation, or people but of all nations, languages, and men, under the face of the whole heaven. We do not ask for a religion that is fitted for the arctic, and yet has no fitness for the antarctic circle; a religion that is adapted to the language and manners of the east, and yet has no adaptation to those of the west; but one that has in it nothing local, nothing restrictive, whose principles are applicable every where, and whose institutions may every where be practised. We are mainly thankful for a religion that consults our interests for eternity; while, at the same time we need one that consults our true and permanent interest for time. We need one, too, that consults all the peculiarities and variety of human condition; one that is fitted to satisfy all the faculties of the soul; one which, instead of retarding, advances the progress of the human mind, satisfies the conscience, encourages the imagination, and ennobles all the natural and moral affections. Every faculty of the soul, as well as every individual of the race, is diseased and infirm, and needs some catholicon, some universal remedy, some specific that can operate on every malady, and that proves itself worthy of confidence by its actual and well attested results.

Have we not seen that such a religion is found in the Bible, and only there? Just in proportion to the degree of practical influence which the Bible has exerted on the more limited or more enlarged circles of human society, on the intellectual, political, and moral condition of men, on their enquiries and motives, on their principles and conduct, and on their enjoyments and expectations, may we discover its universal adaptation to the great family of man. No where are its effects confined to time, or place, or age, or sex, or condition. No climate, no degree of intellectual culture, no form of government, however

despotic or however free, is above, beneath, or beyond its power. No physical or moral constitution has proved a barrier to its access. The civilized European, and the savage Hottentot, have alike found its "yoke easy and its burden light." Every where and at all times, it has found minds to whom its regeneration was necessary and its Redeemer precious. Its followers are found in the camp and in the forum, among the rich and the poor, among the learned and ignorant. It has found its way to the shop of the artisan, the prison of criminals, the tribunals of justice, and the thrones of kings.[1] It is a religion that is never insipid and dull, never grows old, or vanishes away. It is a religion that is never behind the spirit of the age, but always in advance of it, leading it onward, and inscribing on all its improvements, "Holiness to the Lord." Other things may change; but the religion of the Bible never changes. What it was in the day of Christ and his apostles, it is now, and always will be. It has nothing pliable and temporizing in its principles, and yet it is alike adapted to all. Every where its effects are the same. These things can be affirmed of no other religion, and of no system of philosophy. Other religions have been instituted, and flourished, and died, because they were adapted to the times and the spirit of the age. Neither paganism nor Mahometanism can ever become the religion of the world. Nor can the religion of Zoroaster, destined, as it is, to live only under its own native skies, and that no longer than the Gospel has an opportunity of superseding it. The Bible alone can ever become the religion of the world, because this alone corresponds to the universal exigencies of men, to the constantly recurring wants of humanity, independent of accidental circumstances, and irrespective of place and time. Some of my most admiring views of the Bible arise from contemplating its wonderful adaptation to all times and places, and to every variety of character which this fallen world presents. The enlightened and the ignorant, the lofty as well as the abject, the meanest as well as the most splendid

[1] For the illustrations on this page, and for some of the phraseology, the author is indebted to a discourse of A. Vinet, Professor of Theology in Lausanne.

forms of human sin and misery, the living and the dying, ignorance, wickedness, sorrows, and helplessness, which no other counsels of love and tenderness can reach, are all accessible to its transforming influence and precious consolations, and while convinced, rebuked, and humbled by its censures, are comforted by its hopes.

But there is another enquiry:—IS NOT THE RELIGION OF THE BIBLE A BENEVOLENT RELIGION? Is not the world, in every view, the better and the happier for this wonderful book? Has it not exerted a favourable influence upon the learning, the laws, the liberties, the social institutions, the morality, the holiness, the happiness of mankind? Have any forms of government, any political systems, any theories of social order, any refinements of human philosophy accomplished for men what the Bible has accomplished? Wherever you trace its circulation, you see blessings every where accompanying its progress. Nothing has contributed so largely to the temporal comfort of mankind. It has scattered the darkness of intellect; it has given security to life, liberty, and property; it has imparted mildness and efficacy to law; it has elevated woman from the degradation of a slave; it has set in motion a thousand systems of sacred charity to bless the poor the diseased, the widow, the orphan, the blind, and the dumb. It has strengthened the weak and confirmed the strong; it has convinced the thoughtless, reclaimed the wandering, comforted the mourner, and directed the eye of untold millions to an "exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Wherever it has come, it has been a stream of health and salvation. It professes a benevolent design; it has openly pledged itself to become a blessing to the world; and it has been redeeming this pledge and accomplishing this design ever since it was first published to men. Though the experiment has not been so full and thorough as it will have been hereafter, it has been sufficiently full to evince its triumphs. Had it failed, how many myriads of tongues would have proclaimed its defeat! Every one who looks into the Bible can see that its great object is to make men good, useful, and happy. Such is the obvious design and tendency of its precepts, its prohibitions, its doctrines and principles, its institutions and

privileges, its punishments and rewards. Whatever is pure, honest, true, lovely, and of good report, it encourages and requires; while all that is impure, dishonest, false, unlovely and uncommendable, it discourages and forbids. All that can assimilate a creature of yesterday to his Maker, and prepare him for the family and fellowship of angels, it requires; while all that renders him deformed and odious, that severs the bonds of moral union and fits him to become the companion of foul and miserable spirits, and an eternal outcast, it forbids. It encourages no vice, no sinful passions and propensities; while it discountenances and condemns every corrupt principle and every lurking source of evil. Wherever it has exerted its appropriate influence, it has imparted new affections, new hopes, new motives of conduct, and a new and happy character. It imparts views and affections which resemble those of the redeemed in heaven, and differ from them only in degree. They are the opening blossoms, the unripe fruit which will hereafter hang in all its richness and maturity on the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. By gradually diffusing its own spirit of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, it has changed the face of the world, and uprooted those deep foundations of human society which were every where inlaid with injustice, oppression, and misery. It has renovated the character of individuals, families, and nations; and in the same proportion in which its principles and spirit have prevailed, has banished sin and misery from the abodes of men. Its influence has not always been alike uniform, because it has sometimes had more difficulties and opposition to encounter than at others; nor has it always been alike visible, even where it has been real and felt, because its plans are comprehensive and it acts upon a large scale. But even where most obstructed, it has left sensible traces of its benevolent design; and where least observed, it has often been preparing the way for it most extended conquests.

May it not then be said, that the religion of the Bible is a benevolent religion? Who, that is a friend to man, is not the friend of the Bible? What part of the earth that now enjoys them can afford to dispense with the Scriptures? What greater

calamity could befall our world than to lose the last copy of this sacred Book? What benevolent man would extinguish such a light as this? Whoever was induced, from a sincere regard to the best interests of his fellow-men, to subvert the foundation of so much public tranquillity, and so many private virtues and hopes? Who would bring back upon the world the ignorance and servitude, the horror and crime of the dark ages? Who would be the agent in inducing it to retrace its steps to the ignorance and superstitions of paganism; to the impure and sanguinary altars of Baal-Peor, Moloch, and Ashtaroth; to the obscene groves of oriental idolatry; to the hero-gods of Egypt and Greece, and to all that shall foster the basest and most malignant passions of men? Who would throw back the human intellect upon a state of scepticism and uncertainty as to the reality of a future and immortal existence, and the way of securing its blessedness by faith in the only Redeemer? Who would impart anew all their power to those exciting causes of human depravity which the Bible has subdued or restrained? Who would dry up those living fountains of joy which it has opened? Who would destroy or diminish its motives to well-doing, and wither its fruits of righteousness? Who would refuse its consolations to the heart of the bereaved, and provoke afresh those tears of the mourner which it has wiped away? Who would tell the widow and the orphan to go and visit the tombs of those they loved, and come trembling away, trembling on through life, trembling and uncertain to the grave, to learn all there, but not to bring back the secret? O, where is the man that would thus consent to restore to death the sting, and to grave the victory, which the Bible has taken away? No calculations could measure, no numbers estimate the loss, were this Book to be blotted out of existence; nor were it possible to appreciate it, except from the extended cry of misery and despair that would be consequent on excluding it from the world. Fiends alone, and men like fiends, would toll its funeral knell, and crowd in joyful procession to its tomb; while virtuous and holy minds, vailed in mourning, and bathed in tears, would turn away disconsolate, and bury their hopes in the same grave with the Bible.

May we not also say, in view of the preceding lectures, THAT

THE BIBLE IS A BOOK PRE-EMINENTLY DISTINGUISHED FOR ITS INTELLECTUAL SUPERIORITY? With very few exceptions, I have carefully read this book every day for more than forty years, and I have never discovered in it a single mark of intellectual imbecility. Though portions of it were written during the periods of this world's infancy and darkness, and when contemporaneous authors evinced nothing more than their ignorance and weakness; though it treats of a vast variety of themes, difficult, complicated, and some of them mysterious; yet does it every where evince a powerful and well-disciplined intelligence. In mere intellectual excellence, it has claims to superiority over every other and all other books.

It is in every view an original work. It is impossible for language to speak of it in this respect in the terms of commendation which it deserves. Its amazing thoughts and combinations of thought, discover wonderful originality of mind. Read, for example, the Ten Commandments given from mount Sinai by Moses, a code of laws so wonderfully comprehensive and perfect, that it cannot be improved upon by all the legislative wisdom of the world, either as it regards its influence upon human opinions, affections, and conduct. And the entire book exhibits throughout the same originality and simplicity of thought. While it aims not at originality for its own sake, yet "it makes disclosures which have eclipsed and consigned to oblivion all prior discoveries." It does not disdain to dwell upon important truths that are old, and give them to the world again with "all that original freshness and force which is the peculiar prerogative of genius," nor does it withhold disclosures that are peculiarly its own. Many of its instructions are common-place to us, while to the most learned minds of Greece and Rome, they were "new and strange things," and have added almost every thing that is original and valuable to our intellectual resources. Its sublimest truths and great peculiarities it places in a clear and strong light; and what is always the work of an original and powerful mind, makes them as level to the capacities of the meanest as of the highest intellect. To cursory readers, whose object is amusement, they afford comparatively little interest; but to those who will con-

sent to digest what they read, they will prove a perfectly original source of mental improvement.

The Bible is also an inexhaustible book. The extent, number, variety, and importance of the subjects of which it treats, the weight and pertinence of its instructions, as well as the illimitable extent of views it opens to the mind, give it a pre-eminence above all other books that ever were written. The more you gaze at its splendours, the more is your vision dazzled and overpowered; and the more you investigate its truths, the more do its resources appear unwasted and unwasting. It has exhausted many a life, and many a capacious and vigorous mind, while itself remains unexhausted. There are men who have studied this volume most thoroughly and intensely, and who, the more they have studied, have been the more charmed with its clearness and simplicity; and who, at the same time, have been at every step of their progress more and more deeply convinced that it is a fathomless profound of light and knowledge. There are those who have made it the chief object of their investigation for half a century; who have studiously examined every paragraph it contains some fifty or a hundred times; and who, at every fresh perusal, have discovered new thoughts and new sources for admiration and joy. It has been read and studied a thousand-fold more than any other book; libraries have been written upon it, and while, by every unwearied research you see that new truths are elicited, you at the same time hear the most patient students of its pages confess that, the more deeply they have been absorbed in their contemplations of it, the deeper has been their conviction of its illimitable resources.

Mark also the intellect discoverable in the perfect harmony and unity of its object. It was not composed in a single age, but in the progress of sixteen hundred years, and during a period in which the views and opinions of men were in a state of great fluctuation. It was not written by one man, but a great variety of men—men in different classes of human society—men imbued with different prejudices—unlettered men and men of science. They wrote, too, upon subjects on which men are specially prone to differ. Most of the writers, also, were en-

tirely unknown to one another. And yet there is the same great outline—there are the same principles and the same great object and end. Every thing is so harmonious throughout the whole book that, did you not know otherwise, but for the variation in style and circumstance, you might naturally suppose it came from the same pen. The instances of apparent disagreement among the different writers of the sacred volume, and of apparent contradiction in the same writers, are found, on enquiry, to be no disagreement in reality, but rather a confirmation of their substantial harmony. There has been some governing and strong intelligence presiding over these successive narratives and instructions. One grand design, one undivided system of truth and duty, redemption and retribution, runs through the whole.

But more than all does the intellectual superiority of the Scriptures appear in the elevation and grandeur of the design itself. Let a man sit down to the perusal of this book, from beginning to end as he would study a tragedy or epic poem, and he will discover traces of a plan which, in its commencement, progress, filling up, close, and catastrophe, exhibits powers of a most original and inventive genius. It carries you back into the ages of eternity, and developes its original purpose at a time when "there were no depths and no fountains of water, and before ever the earth was." The theatre of this wonderful drama is this extended and beautiful earth; the great actors in it, the three glorious Persons in the ever-blessed Godhead, angels and men; the spectators, all intelligent existences; the time, from the primeval creation down to the period when time shall be lost in eternity; the interests at stake, the well-being of every son and daughter of Adam; the events disclosed, the apostacy of angels and men—the predicted Seed of the woman waging war upon the kingdom of darkness—the special vocation of the people from whom the Messiah was to be descended—the fearful revolution of empires and the rapid changes in human affairs with a view to his advent—his wonderful incarnation, and more wonderful character, God and man mysteriously united—his death and sacrifice on the cross as a satisfaction to divine justice for the sins of men—the descent of the

Holy Spirit—the progressive conflict between light and darkness, holiness and sin—the apparently doubtful issue—the ultimate triumph of the mighty Redeemer—the resurrection from the dead on the last day—the final judgment—the sentence pronounced and executed—the heavens passing away—the elements melting—the earth burnt up—the perfections of the Deity gradually and progressively unfolded, and the everlasting song, "Salvation to him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb!" Such is the Bible as an index of thought and intelligence. Has it not in this respect a legitimate claim to superiority?

Permit me also to enquire, Is THERE NOT EVIDENCE THAT THE BIBLE IS NOT THE WORK OF MAN? Whence is this intellectual superiority? Whence is it that the herdsmen and fishermen and tent-makers of Judea have given a book to the world which is so superior to all the productions of human genius and learning, so undivided and unique in its object, and in its design so unutterably grand and elevated? What presiding genius, what master-mind was it that controlled and propelled them at every step? If the greatness of the cause may be ascertained from the greatness of the effect, is not this book, as a mere intellectual effort, inexplicable upon any other supposition than that it is of divine original? Does not the light that emanates from these pages proceed from the great Fountain and eternal source of knowledge? Is it not the production of the Infinite Mind? Is it not impossible that it should have been the result of human invention? Is it not utterly beyond the grasp of man? Has it not an elevation of thought, a vigour, an extent, a greatness of conception which make the proudest efforts of human genius melt away like an untimely birth, and which bears on the face of it the intelligence and signature of heaven?

Who is the author of a book all whose aims and tendencies are so full of kindness? Does the benevolence of the Bible look like the work of man? It was the remark of the celebrated Madame de Stael, that she desired no other evidence of the truth of Christianity than the Lord's Prayer. It is indeed the archetype of all appropriate supplication. And this

prayer is but an epitome of the benevolent spirit that breathes throughout the New Testament. In no instance does the Bible exert an influence which a benevolent spirit would desire to repress. And does not this form a strong presumption in favour of its divine original? Can a work which bears so prominently the marks of kindness and mercy be rationally attributed to human artifice and pious fraud? When the captious and foolish Pharisees saw the Saviour heal the demoniac, they preposterously said, "This fellow doth cast out devils by Beëlzebub the prince of devils." But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to destruction; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself." To suppose that such a book were a fabrication were to suppose that falsehood is the fruit of goodness, and that the kingdom of darkness is divided against itself. The design to impose such a volume upon the world could originate from no other than the worst forms of human wickedness. And who can believe that a book of such a benevolent character had such an origin? The Bible professes to be a teacher sent from God. As God is benevolent and holy in his nature, every thing that proceeds from him must be benevolent and holy in its tendency, and produce holiness and happiness as its fruits. And does not the benevolent tendency of this book sustain its claims to this divine origin? Can its benevolent character be accounted for, without allowing its claims to divine inspiration? It is true that "we allow great excellence to what is contained in many books which no one supposes to be inspired;" but is not the excellence of their precepts and doctrines derived from the Bible? and where is there a book of unalloyed, unmingled excellence except this, and such as owe their excellencies to this origin? Does not the Bible do honour to a divine Author? Is it not destined to accomplish all the purposes which an infinitely benevolent mind desires to accomplish?

And whence is its universal adaptation to the character and condition of our race, except from Him who knew how to reveal a system of truth and grace fitted to universal humanity? There have been here and there men who were so much in ad-

vance of the age in which they lived, that they have impressed their own individual character upon large portions of human society around them, and upon their own nation, and perhaps, to some extent, upon the existing generation; though this last hypothesis may be seriously called in question. But where is the man whose mighty mind has diffused its vivifying rays, not over one country and nation, and generation of men, but whose thoughts and principles, whose strong and ardent affections and moral impulses have the same adaptation to man in whatever quarter of the world and in whatever age of time he is found? The work of man is a partial, relative, and limited work. But it is God alone that can perform a work, and reveal a religion that is equally adapted to every age, and place, and creature of this vast creation. If there is a religion revealed from heaven, it must possess the characteristics of universality and perpetuity. God alone can speak to the race. His love alone, overlooking all the peculiarities of time, circumstance, condition, and character, embraces the race, and makes its appeals to the heart of man wherever he is found. This is done by the religion of the Bible; and wherever such a religion is found, it comes from God. The religion of nature, so far as it goes, is for this reason from him; and the religion of the Bible, extending so far beyond the religion of nature, is, for the same reason, from the same divine source. Is there not a peculiarity in the Bible, in all these respects, which distinguishes it as the work of God?

Man can perform only the work of man. Whatever God does "exhibits such clear traces of the divine workmanship as will distinguish it, at once, from the works of man. No one, when he surveys a ship, or a steam engine, or a watch—the fairest specimens perhaps of human ingenuity, is in any danger of attributing either of them to the handywork of his Maker. But if we look at the works of creation; we cannot find a star in the firmament, nor a cloud in the sky, nor an animal, or vegetable, or mineral on the earth, nor atom in the sunbeams which has not written on it in letters of light, The hand that made me is divine. The same is true of the works of Providence. No man can trace the path of a planet, or the

progress of an empire, or the life of man, or the fall of a sparrow, or the drop of a leaf, without discovering that all-wise hand which regulates their motions. Surely then, when God undertakes to reveal his thoughts to men, he can stamp on the revelation similar evidence that it is the work of the Divine mind."[1] Does not the Bible carry with it a sort of intuitive evidence that it is the work of God? It has not been the object of these lectures to discuss the question of the divine origin of the Scriptures; and yet, may I not be allowed to ask, whether they do not furnish evidence of their divine origin which may not be hastily set aside? Honest enquirers after the truth we respect; but we care little for the cavils of men who "contend against their Maker." We may say to them all, "Who art thou that repliest against God?" It is no matter of surprise that so much patient and critical investigation has been bestowed on this great subject. No question in the whole circle of the sciences has received half the attention that has been devoted to this. Every inch of ground has been by turns defended and disputed; and had there been a weak spot in the defence, it had long since been discovered and assailed. This sacred book has passed the ordeal of the severest examination; and it is no assumption to say, that its claims have been established. Had it been possible, wicked and corrupt men had long ago swept it from the earth. Men have been forbidden to read it; more than once has it been publicly burnt by the common hangman; emperors and councils have been leagued against it; popes and priests have conspired to corrupt and destroy it; but the more it has been opposed, the better has it been known and loved. Other things grow old, and time detracts from their vigour, but the Bible is always new and always young. A tithe of the evidence, in relation to any other matter, which has been adduced in favour of the divine origin of the Scriptures, would have silenced and satisfied the world. If there are those who are sceptical and incredulous, and will not be convinced by the evidence which has so often been adduced in its favour, we doubt much whether evidence ever convinces them. The strong-hold of infidelity is more

[1] S. E. Dwight's sermon at the installation of Rev. E. Jenkins.

often found in the heart than in the intellect. It has its throne in the corrupted affections. It finds its aliment in the love of sin. Men are not willing to believe the Bible is true because it requires with such infinite authority, and on such fearful penalties, a holy life. Pride, luxury, ambition, voluptuousness, and secret sin are the enemies of the Bible. There is no opinion more erroneous than that infidelity is founded on an apprehended deficiency of the evidence which supports a divine revelation. "If they believe not Moses and the Prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Scepticism has other sources than want of light. "Light is come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Those who most resemble God are most likely to believe him. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." I will conclude by adding—

IS NOT THE BIBLE WORTHY YOUR SERIOUS AND SOLEMN ATTENTION? The real merit of objects is not always discerned on our first acquaintance with them. The great design throughout these lectures has been to honour the word of God. Most sincerely do I wish they were a tribute more worthy of the great Book I have desired to exalt. To me it has seemed that the Bible is not appreciated. How can it be when it is so little known? A familiar acquaintance with the sacred volume is the only way of ascertaining its true excellence. The Abbé Winkleman, perhaps the most classical writer upon the Fine Arts, after descanting with great zeal upon the perfection of sculpture as exhibited in the *Apollo Belvidere*, says to young artists, "Go and study it; and if you see no great beauty in it to captivate you, go again. And if you still discover none, go again and again. Go until you *feel it;* for be assured it is there." So say we of the Bible. You may not,—nay, you cannot discover its worth at a single reading. Though its great truths are perfectly plain and easy to be understood, it is not to be supposed that it requires no diligent mental exertion to comprehend so vast a book. It is, as we have already seen, one of its great excellencies, that it is essential to the clear discovery and highest enjoyment of its varied instructions

that it puts in requisition the highest intellectual and moral powers of the human mind. It has excellencies, which, the more they are discovered, will the more lead you to say with one who was no indolent, or passive reader of its pages, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law!" All the treasures of this inexhaustible mine are not found upon its surface. After all that critics and theologians have explored, rich jewels will yet be found far below the ground. "*Search* the Scriptures." Search them daily. Search them not from curiosity merely, though curiosity and learning are amply remunerated by the search; but from a deep and personal interest in their instructions. Endeavour to extract from them the sense they were intended to convey. And that you may do this, go to them with a heart and mind deeply imbued with their spirit. It is true they require thought and intellect; but it is not always when mere intellect is most exercised and acute, that divine truth discloses itself to the mind most clearly, or in its most lovely forms. I have known men who were profound critics and acute controversialists; whose enquiries indicated an enlarged and comprehensive acquaintance with the sacred volume; who employed all their energy and resources in becoming masters of that varied learning which might shed light upon this ancient book; but who were never "mighty in the Scriptures," because they had not drank into its spirit, and who instead of unlocking this rich treasury, took away the key of knowledge. The Bible is not more a revelation of the mind than of the heart of the Deity. It has a soul; and it is the soul only that can catch its heavenly teachings. When you go to this book of God, let it be not so much to gratify a restive intellect as to find spiritual aliment; not so much to decipher the Urim and Thummim as to find the heavenly manna. There are difficulties, nay, there are mysteries in the Bible; and so there are mysteries in every star and every grain of sand. But if it makes you holy and fits you for heaven, you may leave it to its enemies to reproach it on account of its mysteries.

Nor is it enough to understand the Scriptures. They must be loved and obeyed. Search them, sincerely desirous not

only to know, but to do the will of their Author. Though they may be wounding to your pride, receive them with all readiness of mind. Though there may be a sensible collision, a severe conflict, between the truth of God and the unhumbled heart; yet must the truth of God be believed and loved. It is no impossible thing for your convictions to correspond with the truths of the Bible, while your affections and dispositions have no such correspondence. The word of God has comprehensive claims. Its great Author requires every man to receive it on his own divine testimony. True Christianity is heartfelt obedience to the truth of God. "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record which God hath given concerning his Son." O, it were a grief of heart, my young friends, to live and die the enemy of this Bible and this Saviour. "Hold fast that thou hast, let no man take thy crown!"

I have now concluded this series of lectures. In bringing them to a close, I cannot but express my devout gratitude to Almighty God for the favour with which his providence has attended them. Most unfeignedly also do I express my acknowledgments to this audience for the attentive ear with which they have listened to these exercises. My humble prayer is, that in that Great Day which shall disclose the results of our privileges and obligations, both the hearers and the speaker may see that they have had some influence in securing a welcome entrance of the word of life into your hearts and his own. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, amen!

ESSAYS

BY

GARDINER SPRING, D.D.

ESSAY I.

INTERNAL EVIDENCES OF REVELATION.

IT is no uncommon thing for men in Christian lands to profess a belief in divine revelation merely from habit and example. Men who, from their infancy, have been instructed in the principles and duties of Christianity never sink to the degradation of paganism, and it is hard for them to descend to the reproaches of infidelity; though their religion may be only hereditary, and their belief in revelation fortified more by the traditions of their fathers than by any rational and sound conviction. Far be it from me to intimate that this prepossession exerts no benignant influence, or that it is not an influence of the most enviable kind. But this is not the reception which the Bible demands. The credentials of its high-born origin are of such unquestionable force and authority, that it solemnly and fearlessly invites a judgment which is the result of thorough investigation. Such an investigation is demanded, as the only course of safety to the sinner, of strong consolation to the Christian, and of due respect to the great Author of revelation.

In examining the question, Whether the Bible is the word of God, we should expect to find in the book itself decisive marks of its divine origin. Nor is this expectation defeated. God has magnified his word above all his name. There are no such illustrations of the Deity as are found in his word. Do the heavens and the earth declare the glory of God? Do the works of creation and the administration of providence disclose his divine nature, develop his love and wisdom and power, and all his essential greatness and goodness, and do they bear the impress of his hand? Much more do we see the hand and

character of God in the Bible, and read his name, written as with sun-beams, on every page of this holy book.

Were there no other evidence, one would think that the attentive perusal of the sacred pages would be enough to convince any impartial mind that they are not of human invention. I say an attentive perusal of the sacred pages; for no man ought to consider himself qualified to sit in judgment on the internal evidences of divine inspiration who is not familiar with the sacred volume; and the more familiar he is the more competent is he to scrutinize and weigh the testimony. The Abbé Winklemann, perhaps the most classical writer upon the fine arts, after descanting with great zeal and eloquence upon the perfection of the art of sculpture, as exhibited in the *Apollo Belvidere*, observes with great enthusiasm, in recommending it to the admiration of those who would become eminent artists— Go and study it; and if you see no peculiar beauty in it to captivate you, go again; and if you still discern nothing, go again and again and again, until you *feel it;* for be assured it is there. To every lover of moral science we would say of the Bible, If he does not see the evidence of his divinity at the first glance, let him look again; and if he does not see it at the second or third perusal, let him look again; and if he fails to see it even then, let him still examine; for he may be most confidently assured that the evidence is there to be found.

It is this internal evidence to which we would specially direct your attention. And we remark,

I. From a careful inspection of the Bible, we find that this Book alone answers all the purposes of a supernatural revelation.

When we advert to the different systems of religion which either have obtained or now obtain, we see they are radically defective and fail of their object. The systems of natural religion are to a great extent unintelligible, and therefore never have reached the exigencies of the mass of mankind. They are all confused, uncertain, and contradictory; and have never been satisfactorily understood, even by the most reflecting men. On many and most important points of faith and duty and salvation they furnish no instruction whatever. Every system of

human philosophy, or of ancient or modern paganism, has been complained of by its own votaries; and its best instructed disciples have seen and felt its utter insufficiency to the great purposes of a satisfactory religion.

The religion of the Bible, the more it is examined, will be found adapted to all the purposes for which a revelation could be given. The intellectual, moral, and physical constitution of men, in all the varieties of human ignorance, pollution, want, and misery; in all that is interesting in their hopes, or fearful in their apprehensions—whether they respect a present or future state of being, is so kindly and fully consulted by the principles of this revelation, that it must be seen and acknowledged to be without a defect. The Bible instructs men in all they need to know. It proclaims the character of that Infinite Being with whom men have to do: it informs us how this world came into existence, and how and for what end it is governed: it reveals whatever is necessary for the glory of the Creator and the happiness of the creature, and discloses the perfect harmony between the honour of the Great Supreme and the best good of his subjects. It discovers the sinfulness and condemnation of men, and the method of their recovery: it reveals promises that are worthy of God, and threatenings that are required by the character and condition of men; it proclaims pardon, peace, and eternal life to the holy; and disaster, ruin, and death to the unholy: it reveals the object and end of whatever appears unseemly and untoward in creation and providence; and proclaims the design which the mighty Governor of the world aims at in the whole series of events and revolutions which have taken place from the beginning, or will take place to the end of time: and it brings to our view the close of this earthly system, the day of final account, and the new earth and new heavens that shall never pass away. On all these topics, so infinitely interesting to men, its instructions are clear, full, certain, authoritative. And all this is what a revelation must disclose, to answer the great purposes of religion for a race of fallen beings.

Where is the revelation that makes these disclosures except in the Bible? What other religion informs the world, or pre-

tends to inform it on subjects of such high moment? From what other source can the mind of man receive satisfaction on every point of duty and of hope? Where shall we look for a system of instruction that meets every exigency and answers all the purposes of a religion, except to the holy Scriptures? If, then, it is reasonable to expect a revelation that is intelligible and full—that in all its essential principles is equally adapted to the wise and the unwise—that answers all the purposes for which we can conceive a revelation should be given; and if this revelation is found alone in the sacred Scriptures, are not these Scriptures a revelation from God? We remark,

II. The inspiration of the Scriptures may be conclusively determined from their holiness and purity.

When you look into the Bible, you see holiness and purity its great characteristics. It bears on every page "Holiness to the Lord." When it speaks of God, it represents him as the greatest and holiest Being in the universe, and extols his character as above all praise. When it speaks of man, it speaks of his primitive integrity with approbation, and of his subsequent apostacy and sinfulness with pity and abhorrence. Every where it draws a discrimination between holiness and sin, between good men and bad, and in such a way as to leave the impression that, in the writer's view, the difference is awfully wide and the consequences of it everlasting.

The precepts of the Bible are all holy. They begin by requiring holiness in the thoughts and affections; then in the words; then in the conduct. The Scriptures require nothing less than perfect holiness. Universal, uniform, persevering holiness alone will bear a comparison with this unerring standard. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." This is its first and great commandment. You open the Bible, and you find yourself in the presence of God. Him you are directed to worship in spirit and in truth; to exalt him above every rival; to enthrone him in your heart; to give him all honour and praise; to delight in his character; to be thankful for his mercies; to be submissive to his will; to rejoice in his government; to serve him with the whole heart, and to be assi-

milated to his moral image. And the second command is like unto the first: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Here every grace and virtue are required, and every unamiable and unkind affection and action are forbidden. Every act of purity, justice, honesty, and benevolence is required; every act of impurity, injustice, hatred, and selfishness is forbidden. Every thing that can render man honourable and useful is enjoined; every thing that can render him mean, base, and injurious is forbidden. All that can diffuse peace and happiness in his own bosom and throughout the world is required; all that can rob him of peace and joy within, and diffuse disaster and calamity without is forbidden. All that can assimilate a creature of yesterday to his Maker, and prepare him for the family and fellowship of angels is prescribed; all that can render him deformed and odious,—that can sever the bonds of moral union, and fit him to be the companion of foul and miserable fiends, and the eternal outcast from God and holiness, is prohibited. This law of love tolerates no vice, and patronizes every virtue. No liberty is here allowed to sinful passions and propensities; but every corrupt principle, every lurking source of sin is discountenanced and condemned. To every relation and condition of life the Bible extends the authority of its pure precepts, and prescribes the duties which, in all their diversified circumstances, men are bound to perform: while, with unyielding severity, it frowns on every appearance of evil.

Nor are the peculiar doctrines and instructions of the Bible less holy than its moral precepts. The person and atonement of Jesus Christ—the forgiveness of sins through faith in his blood—the gratuitous justification only of penitent and repenting sinners—the office and operations of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration and sanctification of the soul—the love of Christ as the constraining motive to holy obedience—the death and final resurrection of the body—the day of judgment—the retributions of eternity—all announce the immaculate purity and holiness of the Bible.

This too is the character of all its institutions, all its privileges, all its peculiar ordinances, and all its examples. In its legitimate bearings every thing the Scriptures require and

teach, every motive by which the Bible excites our fears or stimulates our hopes, is an expression of that comprehensive injunction, "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

Now is such a book the work of man? Who of all the descendants of Adam is the author of such a volume? All that we know of man represents them either as basely polluted and sinful, or painfully imperfect and depraved in their best estate. Was such a volume ever invented by the depraved mind of mortals? Is it possible that such a system of moral precepts, and such a system of doctrines, so excellent, so perfectly holy, should not have originated from a purer and exalted source? If the Bible be a human production, it is the production either of good men or bad. It cannot be of good men; because such men would not deceive the world by a fabrication. It cannot be of bad men; for they would never have thought of such a system of morals and instruction; or if they had thought it, they never would have given birth to a system of perfect holiness and purest piety. Falsehood and immorality they might have enjoined, as the authors of false religions all have done: but truth and purity, such truth and purity as the Bible reveals, come from a far different source. Infidels have found no other way of replying to this argument than by preposterously denying the purity and holiness of the Scriptures. But our appeal is to the Bible itself. "I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say." We also remark,

III. Another argument in favour of the inspiration of the Scriptures may be deduced from their perfect harmony.

There is a perfect harmony in all the varied contents of this book. There is a perfect harmony in its history, in its doctrines, and in its duties. Every writer agrees with himself, and all agree with one another and with facts.

The Scriptures were composed, not in a single age, but in the progress of sixteen hundred years; a period during which the views and opinions of men were in a state of great fluctuation; and yet the views and opinions here introduced are ever the same.

They were not written by one man, but by a great variety of men—men in different classes of human society, men imbued

with different prejudices, men of science, and unlettered men; and yet perfect harmony and consistency pervade all their writings.

They all wrote upon subjects also upon which men are peculiarly prone to disagree,—the subjects of religion. No writings could have been more liable to inconsistencies; and yet no one of them controverts the statements or opinions of another.

Most of the writers were entirely unacquainted with each other, and entirely unknown to each other; and yet in sentiment, in design, in every thing essential to harmony, there are the same facts, the same principles, the same grand object. If the writers of the sacred books then were not under the Divine direction, whence this unexampled harmony?

Infidels, we know, have denied that this harmony exits. But the unfounded charge has been abundantly refuted by the critical investigation and faithful research of the abettors of Divine inspiration. If we consider the different sources from which the inspired writers drew their narratives; the different designs which they had in the composition of them; the facility with which names and numbers are altered by imperfect readings; the omission of some events by one writer, and the insertion of them by another; the different methods of computing time, which, on close examination, will be found to be perfectly consistent; the ambiguity of particular passages of which more ample illustration is to be found elsewhere; the use of the same word or term in different senses in different paragraphs;—we shall find that the detached passages on which infidels have laid so much stress, afford no ground for impugning the consistency of the Sacred Writers. The alleged contradictions, though at first glance apparent, are found on examination not real. Nor is there a single instance that does not admit of a rational solution. It would indeed require patience to illustrate passages seemingly at variance. The late bishop Horne remarks, "Many and painful are the researches, usually necessary to be made for settling points of this kind. Pertness and ignorance may ask a question in three lines which it will cost learning and ingenuity thirty pages to answer. When this is done, the same question shall be triumphantly asked again the

next year, as if nothing had ever been written upon the subject. And as people in general, for one reason or other, like short objections better than long answers, in this mode of disputation the odds must ever be against us; and we must be content with those for our friends who have honesty and erudition, candour and patience, to study both sides of the question."

After all that has been written on this subject, we are justified in saying that the harmony of the inspired writings is inexplicable upon any other supposition than that they are of divine original. You find the penmen of the Sacred Volume, whatever be their subject, all expressing the same thing. When they speak of God; when they speak of man; when they speak of holiness and sin, of redemption by Christ Jesus, and of the operations of the Holy Spirit, of heaven and of hell; there is no discrepancy,—but one grand design, one undivided scheme of truth, and duty, and retribution runs through the whole. However the sacred writers may vary in the manner and extent of their illustrations, they are all perfectly congruous. It is impossible this harmony could have been the result of a preconcerted plan; and if they did not speak under the influence of the same Spirit, how is this harmony to be accounted for? In the writings of two uninspired men do you discover such wonderful consistency upon so nice and interesting a subject? You see the various schemes of human philosophy, the boasted treatises of natural religion, are one thing to-day, and another thing to-morrow. They vary with the wisdom or the folly or caprice of their authors, and change with every passing century and every revolution of public manners. But the Bible is ever the same. Not one principle of it is at war with another. The light which beams from its pages may have different degrees of brightness, but it all emanates from the same glorious Fountain; and wherever its rays are condensed and combined, they present the image of Him who is himself Light, and in whom is no darkness at all. But we observe, in the next place,

IV. The Bible is the most inexhausted, exhaustless Book.

There is no book in any language, or of any age, that in this respect can be compared with the Bible. It is what its

name denotes it to be, the Book *of all books*. The Bible is more inexhaustible than all other books, in as much as the uncreated intelligence is more inexhaustible than the intelligence of creatures. The extent, number, variety, and importance of the subjects which it treats; the weight and pertinence of its instructions, and the illimitable prospects it opens to the mind, give it a pre-eminence, in an intellectual view, unutterably beyond all other books that ever were written. It is truly a book of wonders. Its fulness is like that of the rising and full-orbed sun. The more you gaze at its unclouded splendour, and the more its emanating effulgence is diffused, the more do its resources appear unwasted and unwasting.

The Scriptures have taught all that men know concerning morals and religion. There is no article of faith, and no moral duty, known by men, which is capable of being clearly illustrated and satisfactorily proved, which is not either expressly declared, or fairly and unquestionably implied in the Scriptures. The deep treasures of the Bible have exhausted many a vigorous and capacious mind; but there is no mind so vigorous and capacious as to have exhausted the Bible. There are men who have read and studied this volume most thoroughly and intensely, and who, the more they have read and studied it have the more been charmed with its clearness and simplicity —who, at the same time, have been, at every step of their progress, more and more deeply convinced that it is a fathomless profound of light and knowledge. There are men who have made the Scriptures the object of their investigation for half a century, and who have examined every chapter and every paragraph, fifty or a hundred times; and who with every fresh perusal have discovered new thought and new causes for admiration and joy. The Bible has been read and studied, in all ages of the world, a thousand-fold more than any other book. It has occupied the time and thought of men of the profoundest intellect, and of the most unwearied and patient research. What years and ages have passed away in the study of the Scriptures! What multitudes of individuals have been occupied in this elevated investigation! Reflect on the number now existing in different countries, faithfully devoting their

time and talents to the study of the Bible; survey the immense libraries that have been written in defence and illustration of its truths; and though in every effort you shall see some new light elicited, you shall stand amazed to hear all confess that so much remains to be illustrated. The more deeply men have been absorbed in their contemplations upon the Bible, the more thorough has been their conviction of its illimitable resources. And it has been a conviction which has uniformly grown with their acquaintance with the Scriptures; which has never been diminished even by all the honesty and prayer and humility which they have brought to the research.

Now we maintain this is one of the grand peculiarities of the Bible. It is literally exhaustless: which cannot be affirmed of any other book. There is no book, except this, which a few careful readings of a sound and retentive mind will not exhaust. And whence this peculiarity which may be claimed for the Bible? It is not voluminous; though on the subjects which it professes to treat, it contains more than all other volumes combined. Whence is it that this little book should be literally so exhaustless? There is but one answer to this question. It is the production of the Infinite Mind. The mighty intelligence of the only-wise God employed its energies in composing the Bible, and has condensed in this little volume facts, thoughts, principles, and counsels, which will remain a source of instruction till the heavens shall pass away, and still be inexhausted and inexhaustible. We add,

V. The inspiration of the Scriptures may also be conclusively argued from the elevation and grandeur of their design.

The Bible, as a composition, exhibits a unity and greatness of contrivance, if I may so speak, altogether above the reach of human invention. Let a man sit down to the perusal of this book from beginning to end, as he would sit down to the perusal of a tragedy or epic poem, and he will discover the traces of a plan, which, in its commencement, its progress, its filling up, its close and catastrophe, lies far beyond the most inventive genius that was ever created. If the Bible be a human production, then with respect to its general device and contrivance, it is a most wonderful production, and such as never has been

and never can be equalled. No unprejudiced man can take a comprehensive view of this book without being convinced that it presents a view of truths, and a system of operations, and a motive and end of its constitution, which could have been devised only by the all-wise God. The Bible presents a plan which none but God knew, and which therefore none but God could reveal.

The Bible carries you back into the ages of eternity, where its wonderful plan was devised. It tells you of a method, a scheme of operations, which was laid out by the Eternal Deity, when there were no depths and no fountains of water, and before ever the earth was. The first visible expression of this mighty design was made in the creation of the world; and the earth we inhabit was constituted the beautiful theatre on which this wonderful drama was to be exhibited. The actors in this drama are the three glorious Persons in the ever-blessed Godhead, angels, and men;—the inanimate creation, with all its richness, grandeur, and beauty, having been made and continued only in subservience to these, and destined to pass away at the consummation of this extended design. The spectators of this great drama are all intelligent beings. They constitute "the eye of the universe;" and while each in his proper place has a part to act, he is the immediate witness of the whole transaction. The time occupied by this sublime and momentous exhibition extends from the creation, down to a period yet far distant and unknown, when time shall be lost in eternity, and these heavens and this earth shall flee away, and no place shall be found for them. In the early and progressive development of this design, the Scriptures inform us, that a part of the angels kept not their first estate, and that through their instrumentality the first parents of the human race fell, and introduced sin and misery into this world from generation to generation. On this apostacy they reveal a promised Mediator, who was to be the Seed of the woman, and to the introduction of whom, in the fulness of time, all the dispensations of a general and particular providence bore a visible relation, and maintained a uniform tendency. They speak of a universal deluge—of the division of the earth among the descendants of

its survivors—of the separation of a particular family and nation from the rest of this corrupted world, as the lineage of the predicted Deliverer;—they speak of the revolution and destruction of empires with a view to His advent, and the establishment and final glory of his kingdom. In this mighty drama, when he appears the Scriptures invest him with a character which the human mind would never have thought of. He is the child of a humble virgin, and yet the Mighty God; he is an infant in the manger, and yet the Everlasting Father, he is the reproach of men, and yet the adoration of angels; he is the crucified Saviour, the only Propitiation for sin, and yet the Lord of life, the Prince of the kings of the earth, the Head of a redeemed and sanctified kingdom, for whose sake he controls the kingdom of providence, sends down his Holy Spirit, and involves in his administration all the concerns of men. As the part he acts becomes more prominent, and his merciful designs are evolved, every thing gradually assumes a new aspect. The conflict between light and darkness, holiness and sin, truth and error, happiness and misery, between himself and the powers of darkness, becomes more vigorous, and less doubtful in its issue, till he triumphs over all his enemies, and his kingdom is established from the rising to the setting sun, and maintains its supremacy, its purity, its peace, its joy, till near the close of this earthly creation. This great mystery is to be perfected,—the wonders of this august scheme are to be fully unfolded at the Last Great Day. Then the Great Redeemer shall be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe: Then the ultimate end of the whole plan shall be brought out to the view of an admiring universe, and it shall be seen that the glory of its Author and the happiness of all the holy, were the moving impulse of the entire design: Then will the Redeemer descend from heaven in clouds, surrounded by the glory of his Father, and attended by all his holy angels: The dead will be summoned from their graves, and innumerable nations gathered round the throne of Eternal Justice: Then the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal: Then will the visible heavens pass away with a great noise; the elements melt with fervent heat; and the earth be

burnt up: Then the Son will deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father, and God will be all in all.

This wonderful plan is revealed in the Bible. And was such a device, such a drama within the scope of human invention? Could such elevation and grandeur of design ever have entered into the head of man? O how godlike! Kings and heroes, nations and empires, in their earthly relations, are here as the drop of the bucket. Patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs—the general assembly and church of the first-born—principalities and powers in heavenly places—the glorious Persons in the Godhead—earth, heaven, and hell; these are the persons and objects which here pass in review. Here are presented the perfections of God in unexampled greatness, loveliness, and beauty. Here are unfolded the mysteries of providence and the wonders of redemption. Every thing is noble, every thing refined, every thing holy, every thing advancing toward an issue which will ascribe "Salvation to Him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb for ever!" Well may angels desire to look into these things. Well may they watch the progress of this magnificent system with anxious scrutiny; for it is enough to enlarge the understanding and exalt the views of seraphim before the throne. We ask again, is such a plan the result of merely human invention? Is there not something here which must for ever have remained far beyond the grasp or discovery of mortals unenlightened from above? Would any child of Adam ever have thought of inventing such a plan? What human mind ever possessed so mighty a grasp as to comprehend and originate this godlike design? But this godlike design is revealed to us by men, in most instances, of no extraordinary talents; some of them plain shepherds, or humble, illiterate fishermen and carpenters: and yet they speak of these great subjects with the facility and dignity with which men of sound judgment speak of the common concerns of life. And how do you account for this mysterious fact? "What cause expanded the minds of these humble men over this unlimited field of thought? Whence is it that they never fell beneath the grandeur of their subject—never wandered amidst its complications"—never sunk in its unfathomable depths?

We leave these enquiries with the rejectors of revelation. To us it is clear that no human mind ever invented this wonderful design,—that it bears the intelligence and signature of Heaven,—and that the men who were selected to disclose it, spake not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. There is a majesty in this plan and in the manner of disclosing it, an elevation of thought, a strength and extent and greatness of conception, which cast the proudest efforts of human genius into the shade, and which indicate a far higher Source.

To the preceding we will only add,

VI. The inspiration of the Scriptures abundantly appears from their power and efficacy.

It is impossible to exhibit the force of this argument within the compass of a few paragraphs, when volumes have not exhausted it. It is a species of evidence of great importance, particularly to the mind of an unlettered man, while it has equal influence with the learned. Many an unlearned Christian may not be able to give a single reason for his confidence in divine revelation, deduced from a course of logical argumentation; while he can say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation." He can tell you with emphasis, that he knows the Bible to be true, from the testimony of his own heart. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." As he takes the Bible into his hands, he can declare that this book, under the influence of the divine Spirit, is able to separate his soul from sin; and that, because the best feelings of his own soul are in such exact accordance with what the Bible reveals, he is abundantly satisfied it is the word of God. Others may hesitate and "go away;" but he will say, with Simon Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ the Son of the Living God." He has a knowledge of the truth of the divine revelation which is peculiar to himself. He knows the Bible to be true by his own experience. He loves the truths it reveals, and sees the beauty and feels the infinite importance of them, as the food of his spirit and the foundation of his eternal hopes. The weakest and

most ignorant child of grace will tell you, "Whereas I was once blind, now I see." And if you hesitate and complain he will reply, "Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes." Once I was dead in trespasses and sins; now I am alive unto God. With all my remaining imperfections, I trust I am a new creature. I have new objects of affection, new motives of conduct, new hopes, new fears, new joys, a new character. I dwell as it were in a new world. I seem to have passed from death unto life, and to be under the influence of principles, which, while they humble, exalt me; while they purify, make me supremely happy; and the only counterpart to what I find within my own bosom is in that sure word of prophecy, which shone as a light in a dark place, till the day dawned and the day-star arose in my heart.

To this we know the infidel may reply, All this is of no avail so long as it extends not beyond the bosom of the narrator, nor can it be considered in any other view than as the result of strong impulse and ardent enthusiasm. But what if we could show the infidel ten thousand instances of this sort, and these not confined to the unlearned,—nay, ten thousand times ten thousand instances in which men of the soundest discretion, and of acknowledged integrity, should furnish the same narration! Ought not the testimony to avail? and would it not avail with ingenuous minds? And if, in addition to this, it should appear, that in each of these multiplied examples, the transformation within has been followed by an accordant transformation without, and that the moral influence of the Bible upon the visible character and conduct is as great as its moral influence upon the soul!—would not this constitute evidence which even a disingenuous mind would find hard to resist? And yet, this is the evidence which has been constantly accumulating, wherever the Bible has exerted its native energy. Witness the extensive propagation of Christianity and its correspondent results. Destitute of every adventitious advantage, supported by no secular power, and upheld by no worldly interest,—with no other recommendation than its intrinsic excellence, and no other patron than the God of heaven,—the gospel

of Jesus Christ has triumphed over the opposition of men and devils,—visited every land and nation,—and in all its progress has multiplied its converts like the drops of morning dew. Its primitive promulgators and their successors have gone forth under the high sanction, "Thus saith the Lord,"—and nothing has been able to retard their career. They have marched onward in defiance of all the indifference of a world that lieth in wickedness, of all the arts of philosophy, and all the virulence of relentless persecution. Other religions have been devised by human wisdom, and propagated by the secular arm, and they have passed away, and left no memorial behind them, except the deleterious influence they have exerted on the human character; while the religion of the Bible has lived and spread, and left its memorials in the moral purity and happiness of a great multitude which no man can number. There is not a spot on the globe where the Bible has been suffered to exert its influence but it has produced a moral reformation. Paul informs us what the effect of the Gospel was upon the early Christians, where, after enumerating "idolaters, effeminate, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners," he adds, "And such were some of you; but ye are washed; but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." Wherever the Bible has found access to the mind, it has been the light that has dispelled darkness, the voice that has disturbed the slumbers of sin; the sword which has pierced the soul; the hammer that has broken the flinty heart in pieces; the ethereal fire that has enkindled every gracious affection. Think of the myriads of each sex and every condition, rich and poor, bond and free, young and old, who have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son; cast your eye, back through the long tract of preceding ages, upon the multitudes whose pagan ignorance and sottishness have been chased away; whose views have been rectified; whose passions have been restrained; whose consciences have been awakened; whose hearts have been sanctified; whose lives have been conformed to moral rectitude; and who have themselves been made meet for the coming inheritance; and you will have

some just conception of the moral tendency of the Bible. Go and stand in the midst of some of those numberless scenes of wonder and of mercy, of sovereignty and omnipotence, which have thrown such a charm over these latter days and these ends of the earth, where the Spirit of Jesus has moved the assemblies of his people as the trees of the wood are moved by a mighty wind where hundreds have trembled on the verge of eternal wo, and where, after the storm was past, a "still small voice" has whispered divine peace, and awoke their everlasting song; and you may appreciate the influence of the Bible. O what an unbending heart must that be, that has witnessed one Revival of religion, and can still be in doubt, whether the Bible is the word of the all-powerful and all-gracious God!

And with these, there are effects still more extended, that are the legitimate results only of the Bible. The effects of the Bible on human society are such as no other cause has produced. It has mitigated the horrors of war; it has given effectual obligation to the nuptial vow; it has elevated the character and condition of one half the human species, who were unnaturally degraded because they were not men; it has thrown its guardianship around helpless infancy and rescued it from the floods and from the flames; it has interposed its benignity in behalf of the inferior and dependent ranks of human society; it has constituted every church of God, and every Christian community an asylum for the widow and the orphan, and for the blind and the needy; it has softened the rigours of despotism and broken the yoke of the oppressed: it has diminished the number of sanguinary revolutions, and given mildness, permanency, and force to public law; it has proved the unchanging friend of literature and the arts; it has in every view diminished the sources of human misery and multiplied the sources of human happiness. It has opened rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of valleys. It has made the wilderness a pool of water, and dry lands springs of water. From a world of barrenness and death, where there were nothing but briers and thorns and beasts of prey, already has it made a world of fertility and life, where trees of righteousness spring up and bear unwithering fruits, and where the lion and the lamb lie down

together, and where, at no distant period, there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain.

These effects of the Bible also are uniform. Wherever they are found, the Bible has preceded them; wherever they are not found, the Bible is either unknown or has received no serious attention. Go where you will, where the Bible has exerted its proper influence, and you shall see its unvarying tendency, in the same holiness of heart and life, the same peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost, the same social and public welfare. And in view of this native power and efficacy of the Bible, we ask, can it be a cunningly-devised fable? Does not its moral influence furnish distinct and decisive evidence of its divinity? Let the infidel produce a volume which has accomplished what the Bible has accomplished, and I will at once receive it as from God. And if from a view of what the Bible has done, we reflect for one moment what would be its influence on the world were its principles and its spirit universally adopted, the argument in its favour is overwhelming. If we look forward to what it will yet accomplish, when every mind shall be illumined by its revelations, every heart purified, every life renewed, every land redeemed from its corruptions and bondage, and the whole world assume a character which shall be the exact counterpart of this omnipotent revelation; how irresistible will be the evidence, that the Bible is in truth the word of the living God. This wonderful book resembles its wonderful author. From what we know of God in the visible universe, we need only to be acquainted with the Bible to be satisfied that it emanates from him.

Thus we see, that the fitness of the Bible to all the purposes of a divine revelation—its holiness and purity—its perfect harmony—its inexhaustible fulness—its elevation and grandeur of design—its power and efficacy—all combine to demonstrate that it comes from God. And what God hath written shall remain for ever. The heavens and the earth may pass away, but "my word," saith Jehovah, "shall never pass away."

God speaks to us, my friends, from every paragraph and sentence of this Holy Book. It is his voice that we hear; his

signature that we behold, his ineffable glory, which, the more it is viewed in this bright mirror, may the more powerfully command our wonder and praise. When we approach these divine Oracles, and hear the voice of God sometimes speaking out of the midst of the fire, but more often from the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel; we may well bend our knee, and take the shoes from off our feet, for the ground on which we stand is holy. O that divine influence might come down upon us from the Spirit of truth and grace, and beams from the Sun of righteousness break in upon our minds, as we contemplate these intrinsic glories of the Bible! Let the truth and weight of these revelations sink deep into your ears. As men of this world merely,—as creatures of time,—but especially as the proprietors of immortality,—you have a thousand-fold deeper interest in the Bible than in any other, or all other books. It is just as important, that you who have the opportunity should become acquainted with the Scriptures, and believe and obey them, as it is that you should be saved. This book makes an offer to you of that which most you want,—that which is infinitely more to you than all other things,—glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life. I cannot but look upon the prevailing indifference with which the word of God is regarded as one of the evils over which we are loudly called to mourn. You send the Bible to the ignorant and destitute; you carry it to every cottage and waft it to every clime;—and thanks to God that you do so;—but to what extent is it studied in your chambers, read in your families, taught to your children? There is no surer evidence of living without God in the world than living without intimate communion with the Bible. Who that does not mean to remain in impenetrable obduracy; who that does not purpose effectually to grieve away the Holy Spirit; who that does not form the deliberate resolve to close every avenue to the Divine influence,—that is not prepared to plunge the dagger of the second death into his own bosom,—can live in the neglect of these Scriptures of God! And if you believe and understand them, will you refuse them the submission of your heart and your everlasting obedience? Do you accredit the stupendous truths contained

in this Volume, and shall they waken no deep interest, and urge to no solemn preparation for your last account? I beseech you, think seriously of the weighty truths herein revealed from heaven. There is not one among them all that will not prove a savour of life unto life, or a savour of death unto death. It is even so. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.

ESSAY II.

THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS.

I WAS crossing a narrow stripe of land which lies upon the frontiers of France and Italy, where the Alps, without losing their loftiness and sublimity, begin to incline toward the Mediterranean, and occasionally put on an appearance of freshness and verdure. I had resolved, if possible, to ascend Mont Viso. Though not so high as Mont Blanc, yet, from its solitary and isolated position, it presents a more imposing appearance of grandeur. It stands almost alone: and, like a colossal pyramid, rises high above the various crests and peaks and ridges which surround its base. It presented to my mind the aspect of some huge beacon towering amid the storm; and the strange irregularity of the scenery gave strength to the impression. It seemed as though the heaving, angry ocean had been here arrested in the extreme fury of its tempest, and as if the power which had caused had suddenly stilled its terrors, and bound it in solid and enduring chains. Inconstancy and change seemed strongly represented in constant and changing forms—the very emblem of mutability fixed as it might seem immutable.

Already had I ascended far up the mountain, and all the beautiful plain of Italy was spread out before me. That immense reservoir of waters, that well known extent of gardens and cities, of wealth and splendour, which the heroes of ancient and modern times pointed out to their soldiers as the reward of perseverance and victory, glittered upon my eye. At the foot of the mountain, on the one side, had once stood the elephants of Hannibal and the armies of Francis the First; on the other, the forces of Cæsar, Charlemagne, and Napoleon. So vivid was my fancy, it almost seemed that I could hear the sullen

tramp of their legions; and the rushing of the streams around me seemed disturbed by the fording of their thronging cavalry, and all the tumult of a hurried march. I looked almost to see the Roman eagle hovering over their steps, or the lilies of France trembling to the mountain air.

The continued and almost unbroken stillness of the scene recalled me from this vision of the past. All this glory and greatness had departed. Sooner will the first drops which issued from these torrents come back from the vast ocean in which they mingled, and flow again from their source, than aught of all this life and renown return, to trouble or astonish the scene on which they once played so conspicuous and interesting a part. Yet I dwelt long, and with singular pleasure, on the names of those illustrious heroes. And who does not as he crosses the Alps?

It was with a feeling of self-reproach that I turned at last to think of others. The glory and splendour of this world had first taken possession of my mind, while true worth and piety had also their monuments near me. I was standing in the retreat of the "ancient Vaudois."

> "—— Few remember them. They lived unknown,
> Till persecution dragg'd them into fame,
> And chased them up to heaven."

From the eminence from which I surveyed them, four beautiful valleys spread themselves before me something in the form of a fan, converging from the distance, and terminating almost in a point near the spot where I stood. I had heard of this asylum of the faithful as the region of barrenness and ice. I had read of it as a desert environed with frightful precipices, and protected by eternal snows. But such was not the scene on which I gazed. A beautiful sky spread its blue arch above. The verdure was springing from the sides of the mountain, scantily it is true, but for that the more welcome. The valley below seemed spread with a carpet of rich emerald, wrought in with the brightest flowers. Nor were the light and life of civilization wanting to complete the picture. Scattered villages and villas were seen at intervals, and every where the vine and fig tree enriched the plain. The Po and the Dora too, with

their almost innumerable branches, were wildly urging their waters down the rocks and through the crevices of the mountains, till you might see them quietly stealing to the valleys and mingle with the streams below.

I stood gazing, sometimes at the naked and barren cliffs of some distant promontory; sometimes at mountains that lifted their snowy summits where the eagle is never seen to soar; and sometimes at the enchanting plain beneath. "And are these the rocks," said I, "which looked down upon those sanguinary persecutions? Are these the mountains whence vibrated those songs of salvation that indicated to the foe the retreat of the faithful? Are these the streams once stained with the blood of the saints? Are these the valleys from which ascended in many a mingled column the flames of the faggot, the supplications and sighs of the martyrs, and the fiend-like exultation of their destroyers?" I felt as though I were surveying the monuments of deeds in which one scarcely knows which had the pre-eminence,—the faith and constancy of the victims, or the fury of their fierce persecutors. Here once dwelt a small poor forgotten people; a people weak indeed, but full of that faith which wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, escaped the edge of the sword. Here dwelt a people whose glory shone brightest in their tribulations, and to whom it was intrusted to preserve the purity of the faith through centuries of darkness, when barbarous nations ravaged and destroyed all around them, making no distinction between what was sacred and what was profane. And here still dwelt the descendants of that same people, in all the peculiarity of their language, habits, and manners, as well as in all the integrity of that faith which has survived the revolution of empires, and which is still destined to travel down the descent of time, and, as successive ages roll on, exert a reforming and purifying influence over the world.

And can this be the place, thought I, where the woman, described in the Apocalypse, "hath a place prepared of God, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the Serpent"? While this enquiry was passing through my mind, I was lost in contemplation. My thoughts

became irregular and wild. My imagination wandered, I knew not whither. Whether it were that sleep overtook me on the mountain, and what followed was the fancy of a dream, or whether a waking vision occupied my senses, I am unable to tell. I seemed raised in spirit above world; and yet my hopes and fears were strangely connected with its spiritual welfare and prosperity. A subject, upon which I had thought and read and conversed often, weighed upon my bosom, and filled it with deep and serious reflection. My anxious mind brooded over it, as some busy, restless fancy, waking to the roar of the tempest, pictures to itself evils which nothing can remedy or relieve.

I trembled for the ark of God. Errors, deeply ruinous in doctrine and practice, were inducing desolation and decay. A smooth theology had taken the place of those wholesome truths which have in every age been the wisdom of God and the power of God to salvation. The meekness of wisdom was superseded by a vaunting and arrogant spirit; and means and measures were making progress in the church, which threatened to burn over her fairest borders, and leave them like a land that could not be tilled, or sown, or eared, or harvested, for generations to come. I saw collisions of sentiment distracting the minds and dividing the counsels of those who were once joined together in the same mind and the same judgment. I saw also chilling alienations among those who once loved as brethren; while the peaceful spirit who had so long hovered over this fair land was just about to spread his pinions and fly away. Already the ways of Zion mourned because few came to her solemn feasts. Already the streams of mercy seemed to be drying up, which have for so long a period been refreshing our heritage and bearing on her bosom the blessings of salvation to distant lands. From the daughter of Zion all her beauty was departed. Her princes were become like harts that find no pasture; and they were gone without strength before the pursuer. I thought of her in the days of her captivity and reproach, when she hung her harp upon the willows and wept. I remembered and could not forbear uttering aloud that affecting lamentation of the prophet, " How hath the Lord covered

the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger!"

Such were the thoughts which occupied me in my reverie. And they were not without close connection and sympathy with those which had often disturbed me in my hours of waking reflection. The day seemed dark and gloomy like one in November. The sun was enveloped in clouds, and the rough north wind roared around me. I was by the side of a lofty weather-beaten mountain. Its top seemed to support the heavens, and its brow frowned over a deep, expansive wilderness, impervious to the eye, and immeasurable in extent. It appeared at first view as one vast desert, where was no trace of human footsteps, and where no man dwelt.

As I was walking to and fro with a mind almost as cheerless as the rugged cliffs around me, suddenly a chorus of superhuman voices filled the air. The words of their song fell distinctly upon my ear, clear and sweet as from instruments of silver. They chanted, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" As I turned to look toward the desert, I beheld a female form of distinguished attractions and beauty, leaning on "One like unto the Son of man." Her countenance was expressive of intelligence and sweetness. Her mien was humble, yet a peculiar dignity shone in her every action, and her entire appearance seemed pre-eminently fitted to please and captivate. I had heard of one dwelling in the wilderness, whom the tongues of inspired men and angels had represented as clothed with celestial comeliness and decked with beauty from the skies—a wanderer in the desert, but not alone; hand in hand with one more powerful than herself, she had her course through its strife and temptations. As my eye rested upon her for the purpose of scanning her person more carefully, that I might satisfy myself if this were indeed she of whom I had heard, I saw that she was enveloped in a dense and hazy atmosphere, through which a pale light beamed from her countenance and clothed her form, and seemed every where struggling to dart forth its rays. For the moment it seemed doubtful whether she would not be merged in the

obscurity; but the mist was soon dissipated, and she looked forth like the "moon walking in her brightness," luminous in her entire form, and, "like the angel standing in the sun," conspicuous to the world.

I observed that her features were in part covered with a vail. She had a humble, lowly spirit, and though in the full power of youth and beauty, seemed utterly unconscious of her attractions. She had no desire of superiority or distinction; no undue assumption of dignity; no spirit of ambition or rivalry. She did not court applause, nor was she offended at rebuke. She sought not the eye of the world, neither delighted in its bustle and confusion; but rather in the shade and stillness of some beloved retreat, open only to the observation, and consecrated only by the presence of her Lord and Husband. At times she instinctively shrunk from his inspection, and hid her face in confusion. Nor was there in this any affectation of modesty, but a deep and ingenuous impression of her unworthiness that oppressed her, and often indeed found its way to her lips. "Look not upon me," she would exclaim, "look not upon me, because the sun hath looked upon me!" One of her loveliest characteristics, as it seemed to me, was this humble, meek, and retiring spirit. Her progress was often rapid, yet was it noiseless and silent as the dew of heaven. Wherever she took a false step, she herself was the first to detect it, and prompt and faithful in her self-reproach. Rather than feel that she was worthy to be the object of admiration, many a time would she lay her hand upon her mouth and exclaim, "Behold I am vile!" There was a lowliness of demeanour exemplified in her progress that reminded me of the spirit of genuine piety. She seemed at such a remove from the haughty, overbearing temper of the world, that I concluded she belonged to another race of beings. For nothing did I envy her so much as for this unearthly spirit.

And can this be she, thought I, of whom I have so often read, that was "cast out into the open field to the loathing of her person, in the day that she was born"? If so, nothing could be more striking than the contrast between her original condition, her debased parentage, and her present elevation

and prospects. She was like one who had sustained a moral transformation, and had been, as it were, recreated and born anew. Once "poor and miserable, and blind and naked," she was now "clothed with embroidered work, girded about with fine linen, covered with silk, and decked with ornaments." Though "her birth and nativity were of the land of Canaan;" though "her father was a Hittite and her mother an Amorite;" yet she was now allied to a family that participates the riches and royalty of a nobler world, and "her renown went forth among the nations for her beauty. She was the child of God —the adopted daughter of the King of heaven. Her second birth traced her lineage to the skies;—"born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." She had no unborrowed splendour, yet was she "covered with righteousness as with a garment, and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Though once soiled and blemished by her native servitude; though abject in her occupation and associates; yet was she now "as the wings of a dove covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold." My own impressions of her loveliness were confirmed by what I distinctly heard from the lips of her royal Husband. "Behold," said he, "thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair. My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother; she is the choice one of her that bare her." Sometimes he spoke of the tenderness of her attachment; sometimes of her purity and faithfulness; and sometimes breaking forth in the language of gratified joy, he exclaimed, "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee!"

Filled with admiration, I could not but again exclaim, "Who is this?"—so depraved in her nativity, and yet so exalted in her adoption—so impure in her original, and yet so pure in her transformation—so heaven-born, so acknowledged and endeared to higher worlds, and yet in her own view so worthless? The answer was quickly upon my lips. Who but the "church of the first-born!"—the spiritual Jerusalem from God out of heaven—"the Bride, the Lamb's wife!" Who but that complex, ornate, and lovely personage, who is a lively emblem, a typical designation of the virtuous of every age and name, here

embodied and personified by the daughter of Zion "travelling in the greatness of her strength."

This amiable and fair being I beheld far from the abodes of men, in the waste howling desert. "She had no continuing city." She was away from home, often "afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted." The place where she sojourned was a place of vicissitude and wo. There were "no sorrows like her sorrows," and a stranger did not intermeddle with her joy. Here she "stretched forth her hands unto God, and her soul thirsted for him, as a thirsty land" for the grateful and ever-welcome rain. Here she met with delays, hindrances, and vexations. The powers of darkness were leagued against her, combining their strength and subtlety to perplex and embitter her mind, to retard her progress, and effect her destruction. She was passing through an enemy's land, and had "put on the whole armour of God. Without were fightings, and within were fears." External foes, and indwelling sins, distracting cares, painful bereavements, and a subtle adversary often filled her with despondency, and spoiled her every earth-born hope.

I observed that she did not always know how to explore her path, and that she sometimes forsook her Guide and wandered from the way. Then she was depressed and discouraged, and instead of going cheerfully forward, would stray up and down in the wilderness. And then her courage faltered, her strength languished, and her beauty withered. Many a time, at such seasons, would she sit down and weep with abundant sorrow, and exclaim as though all hope had deserted her, "My heart is overwhelmed within me! All thy waves and billows are gone over my soul!" The wilderness too is long, and she was often wearied by the length of the way. Sometimes she trembled, and seemed on the point of fainting or falling; and then again she would press forward, now with a bold, and now with a doubtful step.

Here she wandered amid the gloom and darkness of the desert. Here she had "a place prepared for her by God." With his own hands he spread a table for her. The rock supplied her and the manna descended. She fed on angels' food and

ate the bread of life. The pillar and the cloud moved before her. The God of Israel himself was with her—a friend in need, a refuge in time of trouble. In his mercy and care, in his power and faithfulness, she had resources which never failed. She sometimes grieved him, but he never abandoned her. He seemed to have no employment so delightful to his heart as to care for her. He would watch her every step. He would often throw around her the arms of his protection to save her even from imaginary harm. He would spread his banner of love over her, and support her from step to step in all her course. I heard him say to her, "I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life." It seemed to me that he would blot out all the nations, that he would crush a thousand worlds, before one hair of her head should fall to the ground.

And yet there were sensible alterations in her spirit and condition. Sometimes she "looked for light, and behold darkness, and for good, and behold trouble and vexation;" and then again her most chilling fears were turned into hopes, and her deepest sorrows into joy. Sometimes her prospect was gilded by all the varied tints of spring and all the rich maturity of autumn; while sometimes the snows of winter swept along her path, and night enshrouded it with gloom. At times the skies above her were soft and serene; at times they were black and heavy—lowring with tempest and dark with indignation. Her path now lay through beds of spices, and along the fruits of the valley, which the forest enriched with its softest foliage; where the murmur of the running streams and the light breezes cheered and refreshed her, and every odour, charged with fragrance, brought pleasure to her senses; and again she was constrained, amid the wildness of the precipices and the roar of the tempest, to pass along the "lions' dens and the mountains of the leopards."

As I was attentively observing her, a beam of light fell on her path at the moment when the darkness had increased around her, and when despondency seemed almost to overwhelm her soul. All at once her countenance became bright, and though

still pensive, she pursued her course with revived strength and freshness. Something had roused her from her depression and put new courage into her heart. It was "the voice of her Beloved." A multitude of conflicting emotions seemed for a moment to agitate her bosom. They were emotions of surprise, of joy, and of grief. "Rise up, my love, my fair one, said he, and come away! For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the song of the turtle is heard in our land. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away!" At this well known voice, a tear stood in her eye. She "looked on him whom she had pierced and mourned." I heard her confessions of folly and her promises of faithfulness, and felt that I could make them my own. My soul melted within me, and flowed forth in her every tear. Never shall I forget when she hid herself from his sight, as though fearful of his reproaches, and bewailed her departures from Him whom her soul loved. Then it was that I heard him say, "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely!" Then it was that he "allured her and spake comfortably unto her, and gave her the valley of Achor for a door of hope, and she sang there as in the days of her youth." Then did he wipe away the tears from her cheeks, and cheer her with the promise of his favour; while she, animated and buoyant with warm affection and eager hopes, was once more "like a roe or young hart upon the mountains of Bether." For the moment she forgot that she was in the wilderness. She remembered not that she was far from her destined home, so much did the presence of Him she thus loved smooth her path along the desert, and render her sojourn amid its wilds a season of happiness and security.

This endured not long. Dark clouds again enfolded her, the scene put off its charms, and the way before her was curtained with its wonted gloom. There was nothing here to allure her stay, nothing suited to her large desires, nothing that could become the source of her blessedness or the place of her repose. Nor was she either alarmed or surprised by the

oft-repeated admonition, "Arise, and depart hence, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted;" for as often did she herself respond, "O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest!" To her hallowed mind, the place of her pilgrimage presented nothing but a wilderness, which she longed to leave behind her. Communion with her Lord had rendered it at times a place of delightful remembrance; but she well knew that a higher abode was awaiting her, where she should enjoy his presence uninterruptedly and for ever. There was her treasure, and there her heart. Her conversation was there. Her ardent desires, her highest good was there. Heaven absorbed her attention, awakened her highest affections and passions, and exhausted the vigour of her mind. Her very sorrows and griefs indicated its aspirations and tendencies. Like the magnetic needle, amid all the variations of a transient conflict, or passing storm, her heart exhibited a trembling agitation till it reposed in one unchanging point of rest. There were moments when her faith, with more than ordinary vividness, realized the unseen world, when a hope full of immortality shed its fragrance over her spirits, and made her long for the promised land. And then, habitually watchful of the pillar and the cloud, regardless of obstacles and fearless of danger, onward she went from conquering to conquer. The circuities and vicissitudes of her path might at times bewilder her; the grandeur of the scenery, or its softness and beauty, might for a moment allure her; but her aim was fixed—the object single to which she aspired. "Forgetting the things that were behind, and reaching forth to those which were before, she pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." It was the way to the heavenly city, and she could not turn back. It was the only way, and she could not forego the expectation of that imperishable inheritance.

I stood awhile wondering at her zeal and stedfastness, but my wondering ceased when I recollected that she was not alone. She leaned on One who seemed more than mortal.

> "In his side He bore,
> And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars."

He it was who "bore our griefs, carried her sorrows," and even made her sins his own. It was her Lord—her Husband—her Life—her Sacrifice. It was "He who liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore," to succour and bless his church when all the nations die. I saw the secret of her strength. "Her life was hid with Christ in God." Though she was perfect weakness, she had omnipotence to lean upon. Experience had taught her her own insufficiency, and "she lived by faith in him who loved her, and gave himself for her." I was not a little interested in this view of her progress. Literally did she come "up from the wilderness leaning upon her Beloved." She did not move a step without him. She did not wait for him to lead her, but went forward leaning upon him. When she stood still, she always stood alone. Once I saw her so depressed and weary, that she sunk to the earth; and then he took her up in his arms and carried her like a lamb in his bosom. Thus she pursued her way—for the most part wakeful, active, persevering,—and yet ever leaning upon Him. The influence under which she acted seemed a sort of charm upon her will, and "drew her with the cords of love as with the bands of a man." It was her joy as well as her strength. It gave buoyancy to her hopes, and inspired her with confidence that He would keep her from falling and bear her safely through. When by some strong temptation, she lost sight of her dependence, most bitterly was she made to repent of her self-confidence and folly. Then it was that her time was spent in retracing and recovering the ground she had lost, and bemoaning her sad condition. Many a time has she then exclaimed, "O that it were with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shone upon my head!" But these seasons of self-reproach and pensiveness were comparatively few. Habitually she looked beyond all created things, felt herself to be his creature and child, subject to his guidance and control, dependent on his strength and grace. Never did she delight in her dependence more than during the seasons of her greatest vigour, her most rapid progress. Never could she say with a more comforted confidence than in her most successful victories, "My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him!"

I thought I saw the heavenly axiom verified, "I love them that love me." By nothing was her guide and patron more distinguished than his love for her, and by nothing was she more distinguished than her love to him. In strains sweet as angels use, I often heard her sing, "My Beloved is the chief among ten thousands! Yea he is altogether lovely!" On Him she placed her fondest affection, and reposed her every hope. Her love was confiding and unsuspicious; her confidence filial and even child-like. Sometimes you might see her reclining under his shadow with great delight; sometimes lamenting his absence and watching for his return; sometimes traversing with him the loftiest mountains, and sometimes exploring the vineyards "to see if the vine flourish and the tender grape appear." If difficulties opposed, or dangers threatened, or enemies stood ready to devour; "his grace was sufficient for her, and his strength was made perfect in her weakness," his presence was her chief joy. Leaning on him, she escaped the dangers of the wilderness, ascended the steepest mountains, stood safe on the brink of the angry precipice, penetrated hideous forests, resisted and overcame the fiercest beasts of prey. With her eye on him and all her trust in him, she continued her course. And while the "youth became faint and were weary, and the young men had utterly fallen," she "renewed her strength;" in heavenly contemplation, she mounted up with wings as an eagle, and through all her course of duty and of trial, she "ran and was not weary, and walked and did not faint." While others were intimidated by dangers, or discouraged by difficulty, or lost sight of their Leader; she pressed forward, because her courage was inspirited from above, and her exertion had a spring, a source, an energy not her own. The dangers and trials of the wilderness were gradually left behind her, and remembered only to enhance her gratitude and perpetuate her praise.

I observed, that in leaning upon her Beloved, she was often "led in a way that she knew not, and in paths that she had not known." She seemed to be under a sort of discipline, designed to subdue her will to an unconditional acquiescence in his; to chastise for self-confidence and teach her to walk "by faith and not by sight." Like the father of the faithful, she

"went forth not knowing whither she went." She knew not whither she was going the next hour, the next moment, the next step. It was her province to follow, not to lead; to obey, not to dictate. Her hopes and fears were both subject to disappointment. She was journeying in a weary land, and beheld the way stretching out almost immeasurably before her and lengthening as she proceeded. Often was she conducted by a very diversified course—sometimes amid scenes of mercy, and sometimes amid scenes of judgment—now amid well watered meadows, and now over dry and barren lands—now to mountains whence she caught a glimpse of her promised inheritance, and now to some low valley where the light of heaven scarcely penetrated. Her path was checkered and variable, like the path of human life. It was perpetually changing—rousing her attention when she was careless—reminding her of her obligations when she was ungrateful—recalling her confidence when she had placed it upon creatures. Her disposition was thus tried, and her character formed. Many a time what she thought her best seasons proved her worst; and what she thought her worst proved her best; till, by an alternately painful and joyful experience, she learned to repose all her confidence in her Redeemer, and to have no will but his. I had not seen such a spirit among men. The storms of life had driven her to this wilderness; there to live eminently above the world and walk with God. There was a tenderness, a meekness, and submission—a love, a gratitude, a cheerfulness which evince that she was not long to be an inhabitant of earth.

I could not help exclaiming, "What a glorious object is this which I behold!" The church of the first-born struggling through this world,—this moral wilderness,—is "a spectacle to God, to angels, and men." This humble and lovely personage, thought I, may well be the object of concern, of solicitude, of admiration. While these reflections were passing in my mind, a multitude of voices, issuing I knew not whence, repeated the song, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?" I turned to ascertain who they were that spoke; it seemed to me that the atmosphere around and above her was filled with living beings. They were

of various descriptions and orders, very dissimilar in their appearance, but all deeply interested in the progress and condition of this daughter of Zion. There was a peculiarity about her person, her professions, her claims, her prospects, that attracted the attention of the inhabitants of this lower world. She disclaimed the authority of its maxims and usages. She declined its pleasures, and all participation in its unhallowed amusements. And she would not needlessly even intermingle with its society. She "came out and was separate," that all might know what immunities she challenged, and of what inheritance she was the expectant.

She was like "a city set on a hill." None could help seeing her; none could view her with indifference. Good men beheld her, as identified with the glory of the Redeemer, as identifying their own happiness and glory with hers, as embodying the best interests of mankind in this world and that which is to come. Though now depressed, they saw that soon she was to be triumphant, soon to behold "her sons coming from far, and her daughters from the end of the world;" and though still bearing the marks of imperfection and servitude, ere long to share the kingdoms of this world with her Prince, and wear a diadem of gold.

Bad men beheld her, sometimes to wonder at the peculiarity of her condition—a feeble woman coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved. Sometimes to admire her beauty, for she was "comely as Jerusalem, and the fairest among women;" sometimes to acknowledge her influence and power, for she was "terrible as an army with banners;" sometimes to feel the reproach of her example, for though shining in borrowed splendour, yet was she the light of the world; sometimes to be envious at her allotment, for the smile of heaven played upon her countenance, and the "solitary place was glad for her." And sometimes to hate her with perfect hatred, to vex and injure her, to persecute, and if possible destroy her.

I saw also a multitude of living spirits hovering over her path and near her person. They were messengers from a higher world—an exalted order of beings, and seemed to have come from the presence of God. Their countenances were like

lightning, and their raiment white as snow. They possessed wonderful power and activity, and moved with the swiftness of the wind. They were beautiful also beyond a parallel—clothed with unfading and immortal youth, and glowing with the energy and ardour of truth and love. I saw them lifting up their hands—spreading forth their wings—and apparently in sweet discourse with one another as they watched her progress. Now, they would stoop down and bend their faces towards the ground to observe her. Again, they would fly through the air and return, as though from some unknown region whither they had gone to tell of her conquests. At times, they would range themselves in throngs and companies, and strike their lyres and tune their hymns of praise. One particularly I observed, of elevated mien and resplendent countenance, who hovered around her head, so near indeed that the vivid light that enveloped her coloured and tinged his form, covering both as with a mantle of celestial splendour. With his finger he pointed towards heaven and said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; nor hath it entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love him!"

I saw two dark and benighted spirits, irritated with malignity, corroded with envy, and scarred by God's indignation, come up as it were out of the earth, and alight about her. I trembled for her safety, for it seemed to me they "came with great wrath, as though they knew they had but a short time." I was reassured however, by the calm and confident mien with which she looked around, as though certain of protection from One mightier than they. And then I heard the clashing of arms, and saw the rushing of battle. In the tumultuous conflict which ensued, I could distinguish voices of fiend-like rage and despair, the answer of exulting, indignant courage mingled together, and at times the startling cry of some wounded, fallen combatant, resounding faint and fainter, as though borne and hurried down to earth's very centre. With what deep interest did I await the result! Yet I did not fear for it. Soon the noise of strife gave place to shouts of victory. And from the sweet notes of praise—praise "to Him who is seated upon the throne,"—I knew they were from the victorious company

who are "ministering spirits to them that shall be heirs of salvation," and to whom the Church was the object of unremitting care.

I saw also that God her mighty Maker regarded her. More than all things else did she illustrate his ineffable glory. He beheld her clothed with his own loveliness. "He rejoiced over her with joy; he joyed over her with singing. As a bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride, so did her God rejoice over her." God her Redeemer was with her, her shelter and shade, "her glory and the lifter up of her head." God her Sanctifier too had his dwelling within her heart, and made her his temple; while the ever-blessed and glorious Trinity, through her, made impressive and augmenting discoveries of his own excellence.

Next to her glorious Lord, no object so well deserved or might so well attract attention, as this pilgrim in the desert. I looked upon her with more than admiration. And while I gazed on her, as in her beauty and her might she pursued her course, I could not help repeating the vow I had made in my youth,—"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy!"

Inexpressibly happy, thought I, is the Church of God! Where is there in the world so amiable and lovely a character —where a community so favoured as this! Many a time, when she has had no resting place, and has been hunted like a partridge upon the mountains, has the Shepherd and Stone of Israel provided safety and repose for her, and kept her as the apple of his eye. Often, when she has been driven from among men, and perdition like a flood has chased her, has he himself been her dwelling-place, and nourished and brought her up as an only child. Her ignorance he has instructed, her languor and depression he has changed into hope and rejoicing, her solitude he has sweetened by his presence, her danger he has driven far away. He has been her refuge and her strength. To the multiplied mischiefs that have passed through the earth, he has said, "Touch not mine anointed and do my people no harm!" He has beautified and enlarged her; he has caused her to look forth like the morning; he has "made her

head like Carmel and the hair of her head like Lebanon; he has set her as a seal upon his heart, as a seal upon his arm." Nor will his purposes of love toward her be accomplished till he has purified her from all her imperfection, decked her with majesty and excellency, and, in the day of her celestial espousals, "presented her to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing."

While this train of thought was passing through my mind, I cast mine eyes once more toward the wilderness. No longer was it a desert, but rather an expanse of cultivated fields and gardens of richest shrubbery, every where interspersed with beautiful villages, towering palaces, lofty turrets, and living men. The corn and the vine, the olive and the palm flourished. "Instead of the thorn was the fir tree, and instead of the brier, the myrtle and the rose." Waters broke out in the desert. The way through this verdant territory seemed a high way. No tedious, intricate pilgrimage was it now. Enemies had disappeared. "No lion was there, neither any revenous beast went up thereon, it was not found there." And the pilgrim had now thrown aside that vail which obscured her, and put on her most splendid attire. A voice reached her from the heavens, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." She looked forth now as the effulgence of the world. She seemed as it were "clothed with the sun; the moon was under her feet, and upon her head was a crown of twelve stars." There was a halo of glory encircling her, that reminded me of the Shekinah that stood over the ancient tabernacle. She was near to the Deity, encompassed with glory, and living within the comprehension of his smile. Kings and princes were allured by her brightness, and the wondering people came bending to her. "The kings of Tarshish and the isles brought her presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba offered her gifts." No longer did she falter in her course, or turn her eye backward. She was clothed with a divine panoply, and went forth more than conqueror through Him that loved her. A banner waved over her of the purest gold, on one side of which was set in rich enamel, "The Lord knoweth them that are his;" and on the other, "Let every one

that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." At her approach every false system of religion was arrested in its progress: all mist and darkness, error and delusion, sin and shame and wo fled before her. Streams of light and salvation flowed every where around her, and sent forth their blessings to every land. In her hand she carried a scroll, or parchment, which she unfolded before the nations, and by which she "turned them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Wonderful was the transformation that attended and followed her brilliant career. Iniquity fell before her: tyranny and oppression and unrighteousness were blasted by her breath; misery and despair were together chased away by the light of her countenance. "Every valley was exalted, and every mountain and hill was made low; the crooked was made straight and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord was revealed, and all flesh saw it together."

> "O scenes surpassing fable and yet true;
> Scenes of accomplish'd bliss, which who can see,
> Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
> His soul refresh'd with foretastes of the joy!"

"The mountains and the hills broke forth before me into singing, and all the trees of the field clapped their hands." The Spirit was poured from on high, and the world appeared to be turning to the service and favour of the true God. Every revolution of this diurnal sphere beheld her triumphs from the rising of the sun to his going down.

> "Distant, barbarous climes,
> Rivers unknown to song, where first the sun
> Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
> Flames on the Atlantic isles"

alternately became the scenes of her perpetuated victories. Distant continents and islands, wandering tribes and collected empires, though once shrouded in deepest gloom, now beheld and reflected the brightness of her rising.

> "One song employs all nations, and all cry
> Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!
> The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
> Shout to each other, and the mountain tops

From distant mountains catch the flying joy,
Till nation after nation, taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round."

My reverie continued, but the gloom and depression which at first pervaded it passed away. Instead of a dark day in November, it appeared to my gratified imagination like the loveliest in May. Brown autumn had fled. Winter had been chased away by the softness and beauty of spring. The sun was just descending in his gayest chariot, and throwing his light from pole to pole. The rough north wind had yielded to the fragrant zephyr. The rugged mountain had become like the verdant lawn. The unclouded sky, the balmy air, the rich foliage of the forest, the fragrant flowers, were but faintly emblematical of the unbroken serenity I felt within. The birds were chanting their songs of joy, and all nature was vocal with praise and blossoming with hope. The bow of promise threw its arch over the eastern sky, and as the sun went down he cast forth the signals of a still brighter day.

ESSAY III.

THE USEFUL CHRISTIAN.

THE tendencies of piety are to do good. "A good tree bringeth forth good fruit." The high aim of the true Christian is to be useful. This is the tendency of his spirit, his affections, his desires, his hopes, his efforts, his whole renewed character. It is not that he may be a splendid man, nor even a happy man, but a useful man.

That man presses after a prize of very questionable lawfulness who aims at being a splendid Christian, or even a happy Christian: but he has no misgivings of conscience when he aims at being a useful Christian. He will be very apt to be disappointed if he aims at any thing short of this, while in modestly and humbly aiming at this he will rarely miss his mark.

To be a useful Christian a man must be "well instructed in the oracles of God." It is vain to think of being usefully occupied in the exercise of Christian affections, or the practice of Christian duties, without a good understanding of Christian truth. It is impossible otherwise to supply the motives to obedience, or inspire the mind with the principles of duty. Where religion would be enthroned in the heart, and spread around her all her charms, she must act by the light of truth. And is it not indispensable to the Christian character to be well established in the essential doctrines of the Gospel? How can a man become conformed to the moral image of God, reconciled to his character, to his laws, to his designs, and to the salvation procured by his Son, if he is ignorant of these great and fundamental truths? How can his internal views and affections become essentially changed, if his understanding is

shrouded in darkness? How can he have a spiritual discernment of spiritual things, if he has no intellectual discernment? On a memorable occasion, when many of Christ's professed followers went back and walked no more with him, Jesus said unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." What multitudes in different ages of the world have sacrificed their lives in testimony of the truth and importance of the essential doctrines of the Gospel. Indeed I know not in what saving faith consists, unless it be in believing and loving these great and precious truths. The Christian's future and eternal hopes are founded upon God's immutable truth. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid." And if a true Christian may be distinguished from a merely nominal professor by his believing and maintaining the essential doctrines of the Gospel, much more may the useful Christian be thus distinguished. I have ever regarded a man's religious sentiments as a test of his usefulness. Nor have I ever been deceived in this impression. I see no way in which a very ignorant Christian can be extensively useful. One reason why a multitude of Christians accomplish so little in the cause of their Divine Lord is, that they are so wavering and unsettled in their religious views, and withal so ignorant. With these impressions, I have wondered not a little at the growing prejudice against creeds and confessions of faith. By nothing has the baneful influence of error been so generally counteracted, and the cause of truth so generally promoted, as by these judicious confessions. New England owes her orthodoxy, under God, to the Assembly's Catechism; and not until that excellent summary of doctrine fell into disuse did her churches decline from the faith of their fathers. Old England too owes its remaining orthodoxy to the Thirty-nine Articles. And where will you find a formula which more clearly ascertains and defines the system of doctrines taught in the holy Scriptures, than the Catechism and Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian church? Let it be a maxim with Christians to have no views of truth but such as are definite.

It were unspeakably better to understand a few truths well. and to know them certainly, than to expatiate vaguely over the extended fields of Christian science. The certainty of knowledge is a very different thing from the extent of knowledge. Because you may have but a partial and imperfect view of divine truth, it does not follow that you must of necessity be in darkness and uncertainty in relation to those truths with which you are familiar. Though no man that ever lived should perfectly know all that God has revealed, this would not prove that he does not know many things with perfect definiteness and certainty. Though our natural eye-sight is limited, so that we cannot see beyond a certain circle, nor all things at once in any circle, yet we can see one thing at a time, and that clearly. The same is true of the understanding. Though we may have no knowledge about some truths, and though we cannot contemplate and compare many truths at once; yet we can contemplate one thing at a time, and compare a few things together, and hence come to a definite and certain knowledge of such things as we can discern and compare, and from one truth clearly discover another, and so make slow but progressive advancement in knowledge. And thus it is that we shali see clearly the harmony, connection, and consistency of the great truths which the Gospel reveals. It is this definiteness of view which we affectionately and urgently recommend to you. One doctrine of the Bible consistently understood will almost necessarily lead a devout and enquiring mind to perceive and appreciate the harmony and connection which run through all the peculiar and essential doctrines of the Gospel. The Christian who thoroughly understands one doctrine of the Gospel will be very apt to understand another and another. Once let his views of divine truth be definite, and there is little danger but they will remain distinct and prominent. Clear and definite views of God's truth, combined with ardent piety, go far to make a useful Christian. The treasures which infinite wisdom has accumulated in the Bible abundantly enrich and adorn and give practical utility to the Christian character. Aim at high attainments in Christian knowledge. If you cannot excel in every thing, excel in this. Labour, study, pray, to excel

in this. To be burning and shining lights, you must feel the pre-eminent claims of religious truth. Every Christian, in his place and proportion, is the instructor and guide of his fellow-men, to lead them to the Day-spring from on high, to illumine those who dwell in the darkness and shadow of death, and to show them the way of peace.

To be extensively useful, a Christian must possess ardent and uniform piety. His usefulness will, in a great measure, depend upon the power which the religion of the Gospel exerts upon his own soul. To this, more than any other cause, may be traced the secret power of such men as Baxter, Edwards, Brainerd, Payson, and Howard. One reason why so many Christians live to so little purpose is, that while they may perhaps be good men, they are obviously deficient in that ardent piety which has a transforming effect upon the heart and deportment. God and heaven are not the point of attraction towards which their minds and efforts are perpetually tending. I have known Christians of splendid talents not half so useful as many of their humbler brethren; and who probably will not be found in the more illumined departments of the heavenly city. A Christian cannot be useful without fervent piety. His life must be hid with Christ in God. A living, active faith, receives from the fulness of the Saviour all spiritual graces. Without this he declines and backslides; he loses his sense of the Divine presence, and his heart is left alone, weak, comfortless, and wretched, through manifold temptations. The channel of heavenly communication is obstructed —stopped—and the sanctifying, comforting influences of the Holy Spirit cease to flow into his soul. "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered." The Christian, if he would be useful, must have habitual impressions of a present God. His mind must be familiar with things unseen. Their beauty and glory must shine upon him; not in a glimmering flickering light, but in their steady

splendour. He must have meat to eat which the world knows not of. He must have the image of God impressed on his heart, and be in a good measure conscious of the high feelings and aspirations which belong to his heavenly birth. He must put himself under the training of the celestial Spirit; and his graces must grow and expand, and attain some such measure of stability as was developed in the experience of the great apostle when he said, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Such a religion is not the mere creature of the imagination; nor is it the offspring of ignorance and enthusiasm; nor is it the result of mere occasional excitements and momentary feelings, but of strong and steadfast principle. It has weight and influence. It does not vanish with the first causes of excitement and the first passion of zeal. The history of the human mind furnishes no stronger principle of action than such a religion; nor is there any thing that can awaken the soul of man to greater efforts, or greater submission. It prefers a thousand times to die faithful, rather than live unfaithful; to die with Christ, rather than live without him. The men of this world may not comprehend the principles and aims of such a religion; they do not know them, and cast them out as evil. Men of such a spirit find their peace where the men of the world find their perplexity; their joys where the children of this world find their sorrows. Joyful in hope, and patient in tribulation; they weep as though they wept not; they rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they use this world as not abusing it. Such a man must have his seasons of darkness, as well as his seasons of light: his moments of languor, as well as his days of strength; his periods of trembling as well as triumph. The light of heaven may come in collision with the darkness of his own sinful heart; the divine life may struggle with remaining death; and holiness and sin, in rapid and imperceptible succession, may maintain their conflict within him; while, amid all these alternations, he does not forsake his Saviour. Piety is the Christian's great adornment and gives his character its lustre. The bare hopes of piety, and even its predominating graces, ought not to satisfy him. Her self-denying spirit, her heaven-aspiring affections, her exalted and humbling

joys, her unreserved self-devotement, her increasing purity, her sweet sensibility and tenderness, her absorbing confidence in the Cross, and her deep and restless solicitude for the best interests of men: these, under a wise direction, will not fail to make him a useful Christian.

Another characteristic of a useful Christian, is untiring diligence and energy of action. It was not by his talents merely, nor simply by his fervent piety, nor was it only by his enlarged views of the truth of God, but by his indefatigable diligence and action combined with these, that the apostle Paul accomplished a greater amount of good than ever was accomplished by any other man. The life of a useful Christian is an eventful life. It is fruitful in benevolent results. His energy is not developed so much upon set occasions, or by studied efforts; his whole life is full of labours and events that are intimately connected with the best interests of men. There are pious men, who are called to contend with most inactive and sluggish habits, both of body and mind; and there are those who are never satisfied and happy unless they are in some way actively employed, and the difference in the aggregate of good accomplished by these two classes of men, will be found, in the course of years, to be immense and almost incalculable. Let every man settle it in his mind, that all his indolent habits must be broken up, if he has the most distant hope of becoming a useful Christian. If he is not willing to harness himself for labour, he had better never enter the field. All the springs of his life will run down without effort. His hope and courage will sink and die away, if he has no spirit of enterprise. He will soon become a burden to himself, and a cumberer of the ground. A slothful Christian is a contradiction, which it is very difficult to reconcile with the lowest standard of holiness. A man who is born for immortality—ruined by sin—redeemed by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ—promised a reward that outweighs all the material universe—and yet, murmur at hardship, and complain that he must labour for the cause of Christ! God expects better things of his people. The Church demands them. The age, the land which gave them birth and nurtures them for scenes of toil and triumph such as the ge-

nerations that are now gone have never witnessed, expects better things of them, and things that accompany salvation to their own soul and to this dying world.

To be eminently useful, Christians must also be men of prayer. Nothing has so powerful a tendency to subdue the unhallowed affections of the mind, and the grosser appetites and passions of the body; nothing will so certainly control and direct the thoughts, and elevate them above all that is base and grovelling, trifling, and little, as frequent and intimate fellowship with God. The great secret of mortifying a worldly spirit is to cultivate a heavenly one.

"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your minds." No where does the world appear so much like an empty shadow, and no where is its baleful influence so certainly counteracted, as in sweet communion with things unseen. Prayer furnishes the strongest stimulus, the most powerful incitement to self-denying duty and toil. And who has not observed that intelligent, earnest prayer improves all the powers and properties of the soul, and wakes the mind from her sluggishness and apathy to the exercise of the best and most ennobling affections? No where does that wonderful system of truth, that "mighty range of motive," disclosed in the Bible, obtain its sure and certain dominion over the soul, if not in the frequency, seriousness, and joy of familiarity with God. Were the history of Christians made known, I have no doubt that you might trace the distinguished usefulness of the most distinguished men to their closets. If you will review your own history, I think you will not fail to see that those periods of it have been most distinguished for usefulness that have been most distinguished for prayer. The late Dr. Payson, in suggesting a few hints to a youthful brother in the ministry, among other most valuable remarks, has the following: "The disciples," we read, "returned to Jesus, and told him all things; what they had done, and what they had taught." I think that if we would every evening come to our Master's feet, and tell him where we have been, what we have done, and what were the motives by which we

have been actuated; it would have a salutary effect upon our whole conduct. While reading over each day's page of life. with the consciousness that he was reading it with us, we should detect many errors and defects which would otherwise pass unnoticed. It is this familiarity with Jesus—they are these unaffected approaches to the throne of grace, through all the sins and duties, the mercies and trials of his course, that make the useful Christian. I have seen Christians of very reserved habits in their intercourse with men, who were eminently useful because they conversed with God. You will greatly abound in the duty of prayer if you are ever eminently useful.

It is also indispensable to distinguished and permanent usefulness in a Christian that he mortify an aspiring spirit. Do not contend for pre-eminence. If you are thrown among those who contend for it, retire from the conflict. Strive to do good, and if your motives are impeached, let your habitual deportment be your only defence of them. I say again, beware of an aspiring spirit. There is scarcely any thing that has a stronger tendency to neutralize and counteract the benevolent designs of good men, than a self-complacent, aspiring spirit. Beware of it. Learn of Him who was "meek and lowly in heart." He "that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

A Christian, to be eminently useful, must also be distinguished for no small share of earnestness and zeal. On this point I feel afraid of leaving a wrong impression. Zeal, without judgment and discrimination, spoils a man for a Christian. A man may possess exemplary piety, and distinguished talent, but without practical wisdom he cannot become useful. And yet discretion may degenerate into timidity; may even lead to a trimming and calculating servility. A character that is formed on the highest models of usefulness must be distinguished for decision, energy, and zeal, as well as self-diffidence and discretion. There is no danger that zeal will be too ardent so long as it is the expression of simple benevolence. Only be sure that your heart glows with the benevolence of the Gospel, and the flame cannot rise too high. True zeal will

find its choicest aliment in cultivating the spirit of Jesus Christ. At a great remove from that false fervour and electric fire which has its origin in a selfish and ambitious mind, which hurries men on to act without consulting the sober dictates of their understanding, and which is distinguished for its subtility, turbulence, and fickleness, it takes its rise from the meek and gentle spirit of holy love. It is warmed and fanned into flame by every breath of heavenly affection. It is simple, because it has nothing to disguise. It is strong and steady, because it is deliberate and cautious. It is unwearied, because, like the heaven-born charity from which it flows, "it seeketh not its own." And where shall we look for such a spirit if not in Christians? Where are there incentives to such a spirit if not in the cross of Christ? Where did Paul find it, where did the primitive Christians find it, but in the love of Christ? What can support such a spirit but those awful and touching realities, those weighty and tender truths which are exhibited with such irresistible energy and vividness, in that wonderful redemption which is the foundation of all your hopes? A light and cursory view of duty will not answer the purpose of your high calling. The mind must be roused to the importance of it; you must think intensely, and feel deeply; every power of body and mind must be awakened and invigorated in the service of the Divine Master.

There is another topic on which I will make a few observations: and that is the importance of exercising a kind and fraternal spirit. "Charity suffereth long and is kind. Charity is not easily provoked. Charity thinketh no evil. Charity beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." O if this spirit of kindness—this mutual forbearance—this patience of injury—this freedom from suspicion and jealousy—this spirit of fraternal love and confidence were more prominent in the character of Christians, how would they adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour, and recommend religion to the world! If I do not misinterpret nor pervert the signs of the times, the day is near when there will be a peculiar demand for the cultivation of this spirit in the American churches. "If a man say I love God and hate his brother, he is a liar; for if he love

not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" How often have we seen the usefulness of Christians lamentably circumscribed through the want of a kind and affectionate spirit? There are those who need nothing but brotherly kindness to make them patterns of every thing that is praiseworthy. I know that the constitutional temperament of good men is various; but there is no apology for the man whose external light is on the wane, because the glow of kindness declines within. You live in such an evil world—a world where there are so many occurrences that are unavoidably painful—so many wrongs to be encountered and forgiven, and where there are such frequent requisitions for the exercises of a kind spirit, that if you do not take special care to cultivate it, all the better feelings of your hearts will be suppressed, and the manly and generous spirit of a heaven-born religion will lose its glory in the envyings and suspicions of an earthly and selfish mind.

Would Christians be useful, let them beware of an earthly mind. Let them cherish a habitual impression of the vanity and unsatisfying nature of all earthly things. Let them set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth. Nor is the providence of God in this respect at all at war with his word. God does not require Christians to depreciate worldly good; to exclude themselves from human society; to immure themselves in cloisters, for the sake of mortifying an earthly, and nurturing a heavenly mind. It is altogether a mistaken view of their duty that has induced some persons to retire altogether from the world, and to renounce all the intercourse and activity of social life. The Author of our nature has with wonderful wisdom adjusted the claims of eternity and time to the relations which his people sustain to both worlds. He does not require them to disregard their claims of earth. He does not require any such divulsion of our nature as necessarily sets the parts of it in perpetual warfare. The design of the Gospel is to elevate and sanctify the whole man; to give the best and most benevolent direction to our entire existence; to raise up from the ruins of the apostacy a new creature; and to show its power, not in destroying man, but in regenerating him.

Regenerated man is fitted for both worlds. A due regard to the engagements of time does not interfere with the most direct and quiet course toward heaven. The Christian never appears more in the true glory of his renewed nature than when he carries his religion into the world, and lets his light shine on all the departments of active and secular duty, and there, amid the dust and noise and conflicts of earth, pursues his way toward the skies. It is a much more difficult thing to carry religion into the world than to keep at a distance from the conflict. Religion does not consist in living at a distance from temptation any more than in running needlessly into it; but rather in encountering and overcoming temptation when it plainly meets us in the path of duty. By becoming Christians we do not cease to be men. The world has its temptations, and the world is every where. It is in the recesses of the wilderness. It is in the solitude of the ocean. It is in the retirement of the closet. It is deep in our own hearts. We shall find the world wherever we find our own unhallowed passions—passions which no solitude extinguishes, and which often gather strength from seclusion. No man can run away from the world without running away from himself. The presumptuous Christian will find the world following him into his retirement; while the subdued and chastened Christian will find, amid all the complications and cares of business, a solitude in his own bosom, a little world of tranquillity within, a retreat more inaccessible than his closet, where, while his body is occupied with its ten thousand labours, his soul lives for God, and where, amid all the confusions of earth, he possesses his mind in peace. There is such a thing as living in the world while in the deepest solitude; and there is such a thing as being in solitude in the midst of the world. What Christians have to guard against is a worldly spirit. This will destroy their usefulness. If their treasure is on earth their hearts will be there. If this world is their aim and object, they can accomplish little as Christians. If they would be useful, their great end and aim must be things unseen. They must not forget their high calling. They must not forget why nor for whom they were sent into the world, but every where so set their affections on things

above, that they shall appear like pilgrims and strangers on the earth.

In concluding these remarks, permit the writer in a word to say that it becomes the people of God to aim to possess that uniformity of character which the Gospel requires. It is worth much effort, watchfulness, and prayer, to guard against the more common faults and blemishes of Christian character. It concerns good men to cultivate every grace and virtue, and to be adorned with all the beauties of holiness. The usefulness of a Christian depends much on this uniformity of character. As "dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour, so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour." Little things have more to do in the formation of a spotless moral character than we are at once willing to believe. Especially beware of little deviations from sterling rectitude. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much." It is impossible for the man who neglects little things then to command respect, or to be extensively useful. It is this uniformity of character which conciliates confidence and veneration, and which every where bespeaks a benevolent and elevated mind. Such a Christian will not live in vain. He may have his superiors in some particular traits of excellence, but in that happy assemblage of excellences that go to form the useful Christian, he is one of the lights of the world. Not merely will he find the light of truth and holiness kindled within his own bosom; but he will become the source of light to others. He will be like a city that is set on a hill. Men will see him, and see him from afar. And when he is removed from this lower sphere, while it will be seen that one of the lights of this world is extinguished, it will be gratefully confessed that it is removed only to shine on a wider and brighter orbit.

ESSAY IV.

MORAL GRADATIONS.

THERE is a vast range of moral existences within the Divine empire, from the lowest and vilest to the most pure and exalted. There are also almost endless gradations of happiness and misery, each of which is determined by its distance or nearness to Him who is the source and fountain of all good.

If you begin at the lowest point of depression in this vast series you must look into the world of perdition. Of all beings in this universe, these are at the greatest distance from the Father of lights. There is in their moral nature no resemblance to him, no tendency of moral feeling toward him; but rather everything that recoils and starts back from the knowledge and fellowship of the "first Fair and the first Good." They shun the tokens of his presence. And he draws not nigh them, except in the expression of his wrath. His love never cheers those gloomy abodes of malignity and despair. The light of his countenance never darts across the gulf to soothe and refresh their forlorn and desolated minds. The angels of his mercy never pass those adamantine gates, or scale those walls of fire. It is a world of unmingled gloom and terror, of unavailing sighs and bitterest despair. O there is no source of misery deeper than this universal and perfect alienation from God. It flows out in streams of unmingled wormwood and gall. It is a lake of fire. It is an ocean of sorrows. The bosoms in which it dwells constitute the most perfectly wretched class of existences in the universe; inhabiting a world every where filled with sighs and anguish—replete with agony—hung round with the symbols of the second death—enveloped alter-

nately with the blackness of darkness and the lurid coruscations of the flame that is not quenched.

Somewhat above, and just on the confines of these dreary abodes, are the dwellers in pagan lands. There are vast tracts of this inhabited globe that are covered with the vail of ignorance, and beneath which are millions of the human race in spiritual death. Altar after altar may be seen alternately fresh with the blood, putrid with the carcases, and paved with the bones of these deluded victims of idolatry; while at all their shrines, and under the open light of the sun, may be seen licentiousness and pollution in their most degrading and disgusting forms. Henry Martin says, while witnessing the annual festival of one of their deities, "I trembled, as though I was standing within the very precincts of hell!" Even during ages when reason and philosophy swayed their boasted and undisputed sceptre, men the most distinguished for their talents and intellectual endowments were babes in morals and giants in crime. In what a melancholy night, lengthening onwards from age to age, are the poor heathen enshrouded! The few points, thinly scattered over this dreary waste where the light of life rests, appear like beacons kindled to admonish and guide almost a world in darkness. The heavens and the earth do indeed declare the glory of their Maker, but they speak a language too feeble and obscure to find its way to the heart of a benighted pagan. He knows enough to be without excuse, but not enough to be either virtuous, holy, or happy. There is the bitterness of wo in pagan lands. There dwell the children of sorrow. There men sigh and weep, but breathe forth their sighs and shed their tears in vain. There are no beams of truth and mercy there to enlighten their darkness, or dry up the fountains of their grief. To all the light and life and warmth and comfort of Christian hopes they are strangers. They grope for the path of life, but grope, alas, in vain!

Upon a still higher elevation you survey those portions of our globe that are illuminated by the Gospel. On all these the Sun of righteousness has arisen with healing in his beams. God is known as the chief good, and as accessible to the rebellious. His word is published; his Sabbaths are instituted;

his Gospel is preached; his church is established; her ordinances are dispensed; incense and a pure offering go up from ten thousand altars; and men are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Untold moral influences here inweave and blend themselves with every department of human society, dictating its worship, prescribing its duties, protecting, extending, and perpetuating its joys. There are spots where the truth shines so intensely that it has dried up the putrid waters, and while they have become exhaled and purified, and ascended in the vapour of a grateful incense, and mingled themselves with the light of heaven, they have left the once barren and noxious soil verdant and fertile as an earthly paradise. There are no temples here erected to the passions of men, no fanes dedicated to devils, no mysterious rites by which the votaries of false religions are seduced to iniquity and death. Of Christian lands it may be said, "The tabernacle of God is with men. The Word is made flesh and dwells among them." The image of Him who is invisible is perpetually before their eyes. And just in proportion as God is known do we discover an elevation in their character, a melioration in their condition, a sensible advance in individual, domestic, and public happiness.

It is worthy of remark that there are gradations of happiness in Christian lands. There are those who cast off fear and restrain prayer; who live without the Bible and without the Sabbath; and though the prayers which are ascending every day around them, and the Bible and the Sabbath exert an indirect influence upon their character and condition, and purify and embalm the moral atmosphere, yet are they unhappy men. Wickedness and vice, though in modified and suppressed deformity, though embarrassed and restrained by the wholesome influence of the very Christianity which they reject and despise, every where exert a melancholy power. If you ask for the source of their wickedness and wo, it is ignorance of God, distance from this high and holy One, alienation from him who is the only satisfying portion, enmity to him who is the most lovely and most worthy to be loved. On the other hand, there are those who are encircled by the light of the Divine

mercy, cheered by the light of his countenance, happy in his smiles, joyful in his presence. There is no source of higher and purer satisfaction than this. Under all the circumstances of human life, whether prosperous or adverse, men who have acquainted themselves with God may be at peace. They have learned to flee, not from him but to him—exploring the origin of their wants and their woes at his mercy-seat—holding fellowship with him who supplies their necessities and relieves their sorrows; and habitually enjoying the communications of that grace which drops as the rain and distills as the dew. And though they may suffer more evils and trials than the men of the world, yet have they sources of joy to which the men of the world are strangers.

In this survey there are two or three classes of distinct individuals. Here is one who though not at heart the friend of holiness, yet has no sympathy with men who have no fear of God before their eyes, and therefore is he happier than they. He has no positive goodness. He is not, philosophically speaking, any better than the immoral and profane. And yet he is not so bad as they. He does not live so far from God. And he is not so miserable. He is spared those pangs of a tortured conscience, those frowns of Heaven's indignation, which so fearfully agitate and confound the more bold and incorrigible transgressor. He enjoys a sort of negative happiness—an absence of darkness—a reflected light, beaming obliquely around him.

And here is one still happier, unspeakably happier than the last. In addition to all his external regard for the Divine authority, he is at heart the friend of his Maker. He is reconciled to him through the blood of his Son. He is a child of the Highest. He worships God in spirit and in truth. He has given himself away in an everlasting covenant never to be revoked, or forgotten. God is his refuge and portion. Come what will, he is safe, he is happy.

But there is another happier than he. He lives nearer to the Father of mercies. His intimacy with his Maker is more constant and uniform. There is less that is fitful in his piety; and more that is vivid, and ardent, and strong. He walks all

the day in the light of the Divine countenance. His soul thirsts for God. He comes near even to his seat. With a prostrate heart and a stedfast eye, he looks toward the throne. He is at home at the place of prayer. The occupation of his life is to commune with him who dwells between the cherubim, and makes advances toward heaven. Earth does not perplex, idols do not ensnare him; for he lives above the world and walks with God. Like Moses, he talks with his Maker, as it were face to face. Like John, he leans on Jesus' bosom. Like Paul, and Edwards, and Tennent, and Payson, he is sometimes caught up to the third heaven, and hears unspeakable words which it is not lawful for man to utter. Such a man stands upon the highest eminence of earthly joy.

Above the elevation and blessedness of this favoured child of mercy, there is one class of intelligencies more. I mean those immortal princes who never fell from their first estate; those bright inhabitants of that celestial world who never lost the Divine image, who with Gabriel stand in the presence of the Most High. In the same society with these are the spirits of just men made perfect:—once polluted and deformed, but now sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God, made like unto the angels, and with them possessing as their inheritance the full and perfect enjoyment of Him whose favour is life and whose loving kindness is better than life. Their happiness is as perfect as their holiness is unalloyed. Their minds are enkindled with one intense and eternal flame of divine love, burning with a clear, unceasing, perpetual ardency and splendour. And the happiest spirit there is the one that stands nearest the throne—the one who sees and enjoys most of God, and is the brightest partaker of his glory.

Is not the soul happy in the same proportion in which she comes near to God? Between that vile spirit that prowls around the outer court of the eternal prison, and the archangel that enters within the vail into the most Holy Place, is there not an immeasurable disparity, all resulting from their distance or nearness to Him who is the source and fountain of all holiness and joy?

How wide the difference between the holy and the profane! The soul makes no real approximation to God until she sincerely loves him. There can be no genuine religion where God is not the chief joy. Supreme love or enmity is the character of every mortal being in the universe. There is no higher principle in heaven than supreme love to God. And there is no deeper, no viler principle in hell than alienation from him.

Who would be the enemy of God? Who would not love him? Who would live at a distance from him, whose presence is the glory and joy of heaven, whose absence is the darkness and wo of hell? "There be many who say, Who will show us any good; Lord, lift thou upon me the light of thy countenance." O that I knew where I might find him: that I might come near, even to his seat!

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